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NOTICE.

[The Reader is requested to refer to the middle column of page 180 for the announcement of a second publication of *THE ATHENÆUM* during the week,—with the reasons for such a measure.]

SKETCHES OF CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS.

No. V.—*Mr. Wordsworth.*

WITH what different feelings do we write this name, from those with which it will be seen by (we fear) a large proportion of our readers! A few have read the works of Wordsworth, and disapprove; many have not read them, and therefore condemn; the rest, among whom are we, think of him as of one greater, and purer from vulgar meannesses, than to belong exclusively to our generation, and yet connected with it by deep sympathies, by a thousand gentle and strong associations, and by the noblest moral influence. Wherefore this variety of conviction? Partly because the public taste has been in a large degree formed by very different models from that presented by this great poet; partly because it has been much misled by evil guidance; but chiefly because his poems require in their readers a far more majestic state of feeling, and more active exercise of reason, than are to be found among ordinary men. Of our own belief, we shall now offer some explanation.

At the period of the change of dynasty, in 1688, however necessary it may have been to take strong measures for the purpose of saving our bishops from martyrdom, and our venerable ancestors from a popish explosion; there was at least as much need of a revolution in poetry as in Government. Indeed, from the time of the death of Milton until our own generation, there was scarcely a mind in England, and not one of the highest order, whereof a trace remains, that dreamed of acting upon the feelings through the imagination, by the aid of any more powerful engines than the passions and modes of reasoning which display themselves on the surface of human intercourse, and, as they spring from nothing essential in man's nature, are perpetually shifting and passing away. The muse was dressed like a lady on a birth-night, with a toupee and patches, a stomacher and a hoop-petticoat. Her offspring were mere vague shadows, with a certain conventional inanity of feature; and the heroes of poetry were only more interesting than the mutes who clear the stage between the acts of a play, by being more sillily irritable, more ludicrously fierce, and fonder of words of six syllables, than are real and living men. While the way to bring a description or event home to the feelings of every reader, and to impress it vividly on his imagination, was by comparing it to something in the scandalous chronicle of Greek or Roman mythology; by arraying it in a patched garment of classical allusion; by calling a breeze 'a zephyr,' and a rivulet 'the Naiad of the crystal flood.'

The dynasty of this gentle dulness was destined, however, to be shaken and overthrown, in the midst of its most triumphant imbecility. Three-fourths of the eighteenth century passed away without producing in Europe a single really important political event, or one great predominating mind. But these things were all destined to be changed in the changes of the great moral cycle, acting apparently through the proximate causes of various political convulsions. The obstinate tyranny of

England forced the colonies in North America into a most just and holy rebellion. A contest of principles arose; it was imitated in Ireland, in the conflict which triumphed in the year 1782; and reproduced under a more formidable and astounding shape in the French Revolution. Wars became struggles of the intellects and passions of nations,—not merely of muskets and bills of exchange. Politics were changed into the opposition of great moral principles, instead of the frivolous frenzies of pamphleteers and secretaries of state, for the possession of a village or the inviolability of a sinecure. Men learned, in short, to think and to feel for themselves, instead of being talking or acting mechanism. The breath of universal existence seemed to become a subtle and mighty power, an impulse, and an inspiration. The hearts of men were enlarged by the reception of a vast hope; and their faculties impregnated by the glorious influences of the time. The great visible changes were, the awakening of nations, the overthrow of the mighty, the destruction of armies and empires, the reform of France into a republic, and of Italy into a people. But there were also the stranger, more fruitful, and more permanent changes, the regeneration of the German mind, and the second miraculous descent upon English literature of the purifying and kindling fire from heaven.

Of this imbreathed spirit, Wordsworth has in our country received more largely than any one now living; or rather bringing with him into manhood rarer faculties than the rest of his generation, he has also laboured more unceasingly and earnestly to make them instruments of ideal art and moral truth, creators of the beautiful, and ministers to the good. For these objects he has ceased to draw from the shallow and muddy fountains of so much preceding and contemporary literature. He has sequestered himself from the customary interests and busy competitions of the society around him; and has endeavoured to see, in his own breast, and in the less artificial classes of mankind, the being of his species as it is, and as it might be, and in the outward world a treasury of symbols, in which we may find reflections of ourselves, and intimations of the purport of all existence. He has attempted to build up in this way his own nature; and to impress it upon his kind, by embodying his serene benevolence and universal sympathies in the forms supplied by a peculiarly faithful and fertile imagination. He has not aimed at all at momentary applause, nor even made renown, either present, or to be, the object of his exertions; but he has written from the love for man, the reverence for truth, and the devotion to art, which, though totally unconnected with the business of book-making, are the only foundations of literary excellence. Therefore it is, that, amid all the ridicule with which he who belongs not to the age has been attacked by its minions, his influence has been gradually but uniformly extending; and those who judge every thing by the commercial standard of the day, will be surprised to find that the booksellers have lately thought it for their advantage to publish a complete and beautiful edition of the works of this 'drivelling ballad-monger.'

The main strength of the clamour against Wordsworth has been directed upon his fondness for the use of plain and ordinary phraseology. Now for this there are various reasons. In the first place,

the constant employment by metrical writers of certain set forms of phrase, many of them never used by any one to express real feelings, and the rest by the very fact of becoming the cant language of poetry, disused among living men,—this custom had by repetition so deadened their effect, that they had ceased to be symbols recalling any thing whatsoever, but the precedents for their use in some other writer. Wordsworth attempted to remedy this by seeking for fresh reservoirs of expression in the real language of mankind, as springing from their genuine feelings; and he found his best materials among those classes whom the habits of society have not compelled to dilute into weakness the mode of communicating their sensations; though in drawing his language in a great degree from the less instructed ranks, he of course omitted every thing that by its rarity would have been unintelligible, or which was not in conformity either with human nature in general, or with the necessary principles of human discourse. But it is a mistake to suppose that he never employs a dialect which might not have been collected from the lips of ploughmen; on the contrary, using simple phrases for simple things, and giving unpedantic expressions to uninstructed men; he also wields, and far more powerfully than any one, between Milton and himself, a language sufficient to the heights and depths of all philosophy, and more subtle and powerful in expressing the most delicate and complex shades of feeling, than any English writer whatsoever, Shakspeare alone excepted. At the same time the habitual use of an uninflected phraseology gives extraordinary vigour to all that homely illustration, and fresh, natural imagery, which are so conspicuous in Wordsworth's poems. But in general his sonnets, the larger number of his minor poems, the 'White Doe of Rylstone,' and the 'Excursion,' are by no means marked with the lowliness of diction which it is so common to dwell upon and to ridicule. We find still vigorous in these poems, and in none but them, and the works of Coleridge and of Shelley, the full harmony and profusion, the swell and force of our English tongue, the green old age of that majestic speech, in which Spenser wrote the 'Fairie Queen,' and Milton discoursed the 'Areopagitica' to angels, to men, and to eternity.

Connected with this charge is that of Mr. Wordsworth's propensity to represent as his heroes, obscure, and therefore uninteresting, personages. But is there, or is there not, in the hearts of men, that true catholic faith in our nature, from which we learn that what interests and engages all our better, and therefore all our stronger feelings, is not the accidental peculiarity of circumstance, but the immovable foundations of human being, and its incorporeal, indivisible essence? Place these where you will, so that they show themselves through the accidental accompaniments, and are not stifled by them, there is in them that which draws us to itself, and makes us feel the stirrings of kindred pulses. But how generally, among the instructed classes, is every free emotion checked or masked! Sympathy is called affection; earnestness, enthusiasm; religion, fanaticism; and the whole of society beaten down and shrunk into flat barrenness. But among the ranks of men which are less subjected to fashion, there are still to be seen yearnings and ebullitions of natural feeling, and among them mankind may be studied with more accu-

racy, and examples of deeper and truer interest discovered, than in the portion to which we belong. Acting upon this belief, Wordsworth has done more than any one who has written in our language for two centuries, to realize and bring home to our minds the character of the larger portion of our species. At a time when the favourite personages of even our best poets were Celadons and Musidoras, when poetry confined itself either to Gentlemen and Ladies, or to the shadowy indiscriminate mockeries of humanity, the swains of pastoral absurdity—it was doing a mighty service to society to represent the artisan and the peasant even with the external minuteness of Crabbe. We all feel, nevertheless, that he has looked upon the poor, the uneducated, and the despised, with an eye rather to the peculiarities of the individual and the class; and that he has often neglected those things which belong not to classes or to individuals, but to mankind—the original and still undiminished inheritance of glorious hopes and divine faculties. But it is Wordsworth almost alone who has shown us how precious are the associations connected with the foot-print of the clouted shoe. He who paints to us the differences of manners and habits between ourselves and the mass of men, who brings into the strongest light the contrast between stars, lawn-sleeves, and epaulettes, on the one hand, and smock-frocks, and checked shirts on the other, does much towards making us conceive of weavers and ploughmen, as living and busy beings; instead of leaving us to think of stage figurants in pink-hats and lemon-coloured breeches, with gilded crooks and jingling tambourines. But how infinitely more is done to compel our best sympathies, when herdsmen and pedlars are presented to us not only breathing the breath of the same existence, and treading the same green earth as we, but, in their different degrees, thinking similar thoughts, agitated by like passions and misgivings, thrilled by kindred impulses of love, joying in the universal presence of one essential beauty, and feeling within them, and pouring abroad over the world for their own contemplation, the power and tenderness of that spirit who lives as strongly in the châlit of the mountaineer, and in the sod-built hut, as among primates, and kaisers, and the conclaves of emblazoned aristocracies.

This has been done by Wordsworth; and the immortal writings which have been the instruments and fruits of his labour, afford an admirable illustration of the mode in which it is really useful and wise to combat the evil cause of privileged monopolies and unchristian sectarianism. It is the effect of almost all his works to make men look within for those things in which they agree, instead of looking without for those in which they differ, and to turn to that one source of universal harmony which consists, not in the adoption of the same dogmas or the establishment of the same forms, but in the powers and the tendencies that belong alike to all, that are in communion with the divine nature, and constitute the humanity that distinguishes us from meaner animals. It is this propensity to look at man as an object of affectionate interest independently of any lowliness of station, except in so far as the external circumstances may have influenced the general development of the character, which would commonly be referred to as the greatest and worst peculiarity of Wordsworth. But it is in truth so intimately connected with the general tendencies of his mind and spirit of his philosophy, that it is impossible to refer to it without advocating or oppressing all those principles which guide his mode of treating other matters. His general intention obviously is to view all existence as actuated by a single purport, and parts of one great harmony. But in the present state of society, whatever men may say, the points to which almost every body attaches a feeling of importance, are those which derive an interest from being mixed up with our own indi-

vidual selfishness. We do not trouble ourselves about the poor, for thanks to the vagrant act and the standing army they are kept pretty much out of our way. We laugh at the law against cruelty to animals, because it would not be consistent in fox-hunters, and lovers of luxurious eating, to care for a little superfluous suffering among oxen and cart-horses. We make speeches in praise of steam-engines and commercial competition, for without these sources of happiness and virtue, where should we get our comforts and our splendours? But we shut our ears to the gasping of decrepit children in the stifling atmosphere of cotton-mills, and turn away with carelessness from the flood of debasement and misery which rolls along our streets, and overflows into our prisons. While we talk with veneration, the deeper as being indicated rather than expressed, of great capitalists and monied interests. Luther is a fanatic, and Milton a visionary, because the recollection of unselfish zeal is oppressive to the barren littleness, and troublesome to the fat indolence of the age: and to sacrifice any worldly advantage from love either to God or our neighbour is extravagant folly; for it is not required either by the laws or by public opinion. Thus it is, that the vulgar uniformly condemn as absurd any attempt to act from higher motives, or with wider views than they do; and therefore are the hearts of most men as hard as the nether mill-stone to the perception of the vast and glorious unity of design and feeling, at once the object and the fruit of that divine presence in which the universe lives and moves and has its being.

Wordsworth has done immensely more than any English writer of modern times to correct this narrowness and meagreness of feeling. He has seen, that even though the men and women of instructed society, or the rude warriors of the middle ages, the heroes of ancient Greece, or the ruffians of modern Turkey, are in themselves, perhaps, as good materials for poetry as the peasant poor of Cumberland; yet we are prone enough to sympathise with the former classes, and when their thoughts and actions are covered by writers with a varnish of refinement, to deify misanthropy, and fall in love with pollution; but that our affections are cold and dead towards the lowly and the despised, the men who compose the mass of every nation, not arrayed in the renown of splendid crimes; not carried on through a long and uniform career by one absorbing passion; not beings of exaggerated impulses and gigantic efforts; but frail and erring, misguided by vulgar hopes, and grasping eagerly at momentary objects. We are ready enough to allow that wisdom is treasured up in books; that the thoughts and deeds of the wise and powerful are fit subjects of contemplation; to pour forth our souls in delight at the aspect of armed and towered cities; and to give out the inmost heart of admiration, when we see the thronging armadas of an empire spring forward like the eagle of the deity, to sail before the tempest, and bear the thunder round the globe. We rejoice in the goodness of our own imaginations, and boast ourselves in the might of our own hands. But it is Wordsworth, and such as Wordsworth, who withdraw us from these exultations, to feel the beauty of a pebble or a leaf; to listen to the still small voice which whispers along the twilight streamlet, and murmurs in the sea-side shell; and to lift among the stars a hymn of humble thanksgiving from the crags of lonely mountains. The exuberant sympathies of the poet gush out on every grain of sand; they find a germ of love in every wild-flower of the solitude; they go forth conquering and to conquer, to meet with matter and support even in the dim corners and far wildernesses of creation; but they have their most congenial objects wherever there is a human heart, which the poet may speak to in the tone of a kinsman, and find in it a home for his affections.

These peculiarities of Mr. Wordsworth's mind,

as displayed in his writings, spring partly from the essential individuality of his nature, and partly from those tendencies of the time, which he has wisely thought himself called on to oppose. The succession of men of pure and lofty genius is, indeed, a kind of compensation-balance to society; counteracting alike the opposite extremes of its moral temperature. To the demands of this the appointed office of great men, we may in some degree refer one of the especial points of interest in Mr. Wordsworth's disposition and powers. He seems to have scarcely any propensity to increase his knowledge or sharpen his apprehension of the every-day doings of worldly men. He loves to repose upon meditation, or only to send forth the mind for the purpose of contemplating the beauty of the material world, or of studying man in the individual; instead of mingling actively with the busy life of society. He pours into his personages the strong life and moving breath of genius, but they have little of the air of the mart or the farm-yard. They have, indeed, all that which is so completely wanting in the heroes of Lord Byron, the absolute truth of being, the nature which is so uniform under so many varieties; they are made up of the elements of universal, but want the accidents of social, humanity. Wordsworth appears to take no pleasure in watching the entangled threads of passion which bind together crowds with such many-coloured, yet scarcely distinguishable feelings. He retires from the conflict of mingled and heterogeneous interests. He loves to muse by winding rivers; but the tumultuous current of men's ordinary motives has little for his contemplation. He delights to gaze upon cities; but it is when 'all that mighty heart is lying still.' He cares not to trace through all the eagerness of men's selfish pursuits, a subtle vein of better feeling; or to look with keen and searching eye upon the follies and fluctuations of society. He has, therefore, no dramatic power whatsoever, and would probably fail completely in the simplest form of tragedy; while comedy is entirely out of the question. In all this he is directly the opposite of his greatest contemporary poet, Goëthe, who seems to take almost equal pleasure in the study of every class of human character, and to delight in tracing the involutions of cunning or the rush of crime; at least, as much as in observing and sympathizing with pure and lofty excellence. Goëthe, moreover, is peculiarly shrewd and philosophical in detecting the action and re-action of social circumstances on individual character, the intertwining of good and evil motive, and the most delicate and apparently causeless shades of capricious selfishness. The difference of the two minds is, perhaps, wisely ordained. For the practical and working Englishman will be benefited and improved by those aspirations to invisible good, and inward perfection, towards which the Germans are already far more generally inclined. Whether the German is or is not too abstracted a being, may admit of dispute; but there can be little doubt that the Englishman is vastly too much engrossed with the casual business of the hour. His thinking is far too completely guided by the multiplication-table and the foot-rule.

This fondness for the actual and the outward, this tendency to wrap ourselves up in the petty interest of the moment, is opposed by the whole strain of Wordsworth's poetry. He diffuses his affections over every thing around him; and lets them be restricted by no arbitrary limits, and confined within no sectarian enclosures. He looks round upon the world and upon man with eyes of serene rejoicing; and traces all the workings of that spirit of good, of whose influence he is conscious in his own heart. But from his want of that mastery over forms which was never possessed so perfectly by any one as by Shakespeare, he cannot make so intelligible to all men, as he otherwise might, the depth and value of his own feelings. This has prevented his works from becoming more powerful instruments than they

can for ages be, in diffusing the free philosophy and catholic religion so conspicuous throughout his writings. For those, however, who really wish to understand the mind, and sympathise with the affections, of this glorious poet, there is nothing in his works of rugged or ungrateful. The language is the most translucent of atmospheres for the thought. The illustrations are furnished by a sensibility of perception which has made his memory a store-house of substantial riches. The images are moreover the types of none but the truest and most healthy feelings; and the ethics of this most philosophical Christian may all be summed up in the one principle of love to God and to his creatures. Like those angels who are made a flame of fire, he burns with a calm and holy light, and the radiance which shows so strange amid the contrasted glare and blackness of the present, will blend with the dawning of a better time as with its native substance.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. By DUGALD STEWART. 3d vol.

Of all writers on metaphysics, no one has done more to make his subject palatable to the uninitiated than Mr. Stewart. He is extremely happy in his illustrations of philosophical principles, by the daily phenomena of mind; and his very lucid style is entirely divested of that harsh and needless jargon which rendered the science forbidding to the general reader, and retarded its progress with the learned. It is a frequent complaint with metaphysicians, that, before they could interfere to prevent it, the vulgar had quite spoiled the language for all philosophical purposes; and Mr. Stewart himself dwells long and often upon this their tender subject, but certainly without due cause, for he, at least, has always contrived in this same vulgar tongue most satisfactorily to express his meaning, without having recourse to a new nomenclature, or to any part of the crabbed phraseology of his predecessors. Indeed, we suspect that metaphysical writers are themselves chiefly to blame for all perplexity on the score of language, and that there would have been much less dispute between them than there has been, if they had from the first departed as little as possible from ordinary modes of speech, instead of inventing, each for himself, some novel and barbarous phrase which disgusted the generality, perplexed even their abstract brethren, and ended in confusing their inventors.

Mr. Stewart does not possess so generalizing a mind as is commonly looked for in authors of his description; but he is not the less useful, perhaps, on this account; for, having no very decided system to support, he has not been under any strong temptation to conceal or disguise his facts. Although he is not one who would have probably led the way the first into the science, and is very far from being able finally to fix and establish its principles, he will be remembered as being, in the interim, of great utility. In the volume before us, there is still less of this systematizing power, and less of close and sustained reasoning, than in any of his former publications. His subjects are unconnected, his reflections short; he amuses himself too much with quotation and extract, and wastes his time in discussing what his predecessors have said, or rather what it is they have just left for him to say on the subject. His observations are ushered in with no little ceremony, are most sedulously attended on by the notes below, and have no sooner made their exit, than their originality and merit are fully canvassed. He takes in all subjects by the way, and often steps aside to perform the part of a critic, which, it may be observed, he always does with great good-nature. There is somewhat of garrulity in all this, but it is the garrulity of a philosopher, and is never displeasing. There is no doubt that the book is highly amusing, if we can apply such an expression to a philosophical work. Indeed it is,

for the most part, rather an application, and a most entertaining one, of the principles of metaphysics, than a strenuous examination of those principles themselves. His portraits of the mathematician, the metaphysician, and the poet, are excellent, and aptly illustrate the utility of those studies which his 'Elements' are so well capable of making attractive. Students, however, who have been gravely anticipating the work, will find themselves disappointed; and, considering the long time of gestation, (it is at the interval of twenty years that Mr. Stewart publishes his volumes,) they had a right to expect a more serious and important production. The long account of the blind and deaf boy, James Mitchell, is doubtless valuable, but is scarcely in its place in a volume of Elements; and it is an unusual way of filling up a quarto, to print in it all the materials for a new edition of his former works.

It is a frequent imputation against this abstract science, that there is so much uncertainty in it, and so very little accordance among its professors; and we often hear a parallel drawn, in this respect, between writers on Natural Philosophy and those on Moral Philosophy, much to the disadvantage of the latter. We do not deny all this; but there is one circumstance which tends to make the difference between these two kinds of writers appear greater than it really is: the former have all written in the same language, while this can scarcely be said of metaphysical authors, who, by their new and ever-shifting phraseology, have disguised the same idea under so many different forms, that it requires more than usual pains to discover its identity. If, however, this pains were taken, there would be found a great body of truth admitted on all sides. Mr. Stewart is not a writer, it must be acknowledged, likely to impress us with the certainty of his science. His caution is extreme; and he does not appear to have formed himself any decided opinion upon several important matters. Neither do we think his doubts on the generally received theories have in all cases a sufficient foundation. We shall instance one of these. It has been the laudable endeavour of philosophers, to explain the phenomena of mind, as far as possible, by the operation of general causes, without having recourse oftener than necessary to that indefinite and unmanageable power of instinct. Doubtless this has been sometimes attempted, as our author observes, upon slight grounds; and facts which seemed to impugn the favourite theory, that all our ideas are obtained by experience and reflection, have been somewhat uncourteously received, and unceremoniously dismissed. Still it is a good object to aim at; and in consistency with this, it was thought that children interpreted the smiles and frowns of their parents, not by a peculiar instinct given to them for this purpose, but that they learned their meaning from experience, having always received kindnesses, accompanied with the one, and denial with the other. Mr. Stewart is not satisfied with this account of the matter. As he has twice repeated his reasons, once when treating on natural language, and again in his chapter on Imitation, we presume that he has attached considerable importance to them; and yet, even to our southern intellects, (unused albeit to the metaphysical,) they appear to admit of a very easy answer. We shall state Mr. Stewart's objections in his own words:—

'A child is able at a very early period to understand the meaning of smiles and frowns, of a soothing and threatening tone of voice,—long, at least, before it can be supposed capable of so much abstraction as to remark the connection between a passion and its external effects. If the interpretation of natural signs be the result of experience, whence is it that children understand their meaning at a much earlier period than they do that of arbitrary signs?'

Simply, we should say, because their attention is more frequently called to these natural signs, and because these signs are made ex-

pressive of their first and most necessary wants. It would seem that it was the very object of mothers and nurses to teach children this language of looks and tones; for they accompany, from first infancy, all their tender cares with smiles and a soothing voice. To assert that a child understands these 'long before it can be supposed capable of so much abstraction as to remark the connection between a passion and its external effect,' is at once to prejudge the question. For who is to decide at what time an infant can be supposed capable of such a mental operation? Neither is it imagined that a connection between a passion and its external effect is remarked. It is not the *love* or *anger* of another person, which a child at first associates with his smile or frown, but its own pleasures and pains, which are recalled to its mind by these outward symbols which have always accompanied them. And here we will observe, that if we interpret the expressions of countenance from that unerring guide, instinct, how is it that infants so much sooner discriminate a smile from a frown, than a smiling face from a crying one? The fact is, that, as Mr. Stewart himself somewhere observes, there is a great similarity in the lines of the face under these two last expressions, and it requires a longer time and greater experience to distinguish between them. Mr. Stewart's second objection is,

'If natural signs be interpreted in consequence of experience only, why are we more affected by natural signs than by artificial ones?'

To this also a very simple answer suggests itself. These natural signs, being found invariably connected with certain feelings, bring a stronger conviction of the existence of a certain state of feeling than any other symbol possibly could do. Thus if a friend were to write to us that he was displeased and offended, we should not be so affected by this as if we were to witness his cold demeanour and severe countenance; because these would convey to us a far stronger conviction of our friend's displeasure than could the letter. That one set of signs is more impressive than another, is not sufficient reason to establish that they have had a different origin. Emblems are thought to convey their meaning in a more forcible manner than letter-press, yet it has never been imagined that love-knots or burning hearts are instinctively interpreted.

We have in our turn to be sceptical on a theory of Mr. Stewart's. The learned have been long perplexing themselves to find the origin of the Sanscrit, Sungscrit, or Shanscrit language, or by whatever other name it goes, which wanders about Hindoostan without any respectable parentage. Mr. Stewart, to mend the matter, has fathered it on the priests. He supposes that the Brahmins amused themselves with making a new language after the model of the Greek tongue, of which they got a very reputable knowledge from some of the followers of Alexander. Now, we are not Shanscrit scholars, and therefore shall enter into none of the philological arguments. We shall content ourselves by generally remarking on the extreme improbability of this account. What in the world could it be that these Hindoo sages should take all this pains to conceal? And what need was there for that laborious invention of a new language, when it has been the experience of all philosophers, that a little jargon, and a few hard words, will render their talk or their writing sufficiently unintelligible? And what a philological mania must they have had, to have supported them under the painful and ridiculous drudgery of learning to speak such a language after they had invented it? They must have been much unlike all other priests we have known. Besides, what have been the works translated from this Shanscrit? Romances, plays, poems. Poetry written in a language that was not learned in early days, ~~that~~ was not the speech of youth, the mother-tongue! Impossible! We know that European

scholars have been fond of writing Greek and Latin verses; but it must be remembered that these languages had been already employed for all the purposes of eloquence and poetry, and had thus become associated with the feelings they expressed; but to write pathetically in a dead arbitrary cypher—it could not be!

We used to hear much talk of the knowledge concealed by the priesthood, as well of Egypt as of India; but we believe it is now pretty well understood, that wherever there is this great mystery of concealment, there is in reality little or nothing to hide. This mystery is in fact the only method in the absence of knowledge by which the reverence of the people can be obtained. Taking this into our consideration, does it seem probable that the Brahmins of Alexander's time should have had any inducement whatever to enter into the task, (supposing them even capable of it,) which Mr. Stewart has given them? We cannot believe that they really had, as he in one part of his work seems to hint, any system of philosophy so pure that it required for its expression a purely philosophical language; and if they wished to speak a strange tongue merely to astound the vulgar, and add to the mystery of their character, why would not the Greek do at once? It was surely sufficiently unknown. There was no need for the laborious undertaking of displacing every Greek word by a new one of their own invention.

AUSTRIA AS IT IS.

Austria as it is; or, Sketches of Continental Courts. By an EYE-WITNESS. Pp. 228. Hurst and Chance London, 1828.

The despotism of modern times has all the deformity, without any of the supposititious advantages of its ancient forms. Imagination has almost taught us to venerate the monarchs of old Assyria and Macedon for the power and splendour of their regality; they ruled over their kingdoms with the bearing of demigods, and the pomp of their courts, their prodigality of riches, and countless armies, sometimes make us forget both how they established their thrones, and from what sources they derived their wealth. It might also be said, perhaps, that there have been times in which tyranny itself was half cleared of its guilt, either by the indolence of the people or by their love of pomp and luxury, which made them willing to pay their liberty for a share in the glory of a mighty and victorious monarch. But there is nothing in the continental despotism of the present day, from which the most ardent devotee of royalty could draw any such apologies as these. Its purple robe is threadbare. The grandeur of the deceit is vanished, and instead of seeing before us a magician full of the glories of his art, and almost deceived himself by the splendour of his machinations, we behold a pitiful and meagre creature, who, though lame and blind, retains the power and villainy of witchcraft.

Germany is a good study for the observation of despotism in its different scales. The mere feudal baron and the crowned king, the master of a few leagues of territory and the sovereign lord of a whole country, may there be seen working out the same theory, and demonstrating to the least reflective mind, how much more dangerous an element than either fire or water, is the spirit of power when made the master, rather than the servant, of human happiness.

The sketch given of Austrian misrule, by the work under our notice, is animating and instructive. It is made by a native of the country, and with a quick perception of its real wants and distresses. From the variety of anecdotes it contains of persons and manners, the author has made it one of the most interesting publications that we have seen on Austria; and the good sense he has evinced, in generally leaving his accounts to speak for themselves, gives us confidence in the sobriety and faithfulness of the re-

lation. In a country where every order of men, and every human pursuit, and interest is subjected to the safety and caprice of the monarch, it is curious to observe how the public intellect acts under such circumstances, or what resources are sought for when the sphere both of hope and pleasure is so narrowed. It is an advantage therefore to possess such a work as that before us; and we think if there be any nobility in man's nature, any value in the moral attributes of the human heart, or any thing which distinguishes our kind from that of infirm animals, it reads a lesson of deeper interest to the philosopher and the philanthropist, than it does to the busiest and the shrewdest reasoners on expediency. If ever the nations of the earth enjoy a steady and universal freedom, it will be brought about by the men whose minds are elevated by the grandeur of truth, by the splendid vision of liberty opening all hearts to her influence, and ordering all things by her rule. There is a noble seriousness and dignity in true and effective patriotism, that makes it the virtue of the greatest minds, and the contempt of the most corrupt.

But we return to the amusing work in our hand, from which we shall select for our readers some interesting passages. Our first extract presents a well-contrasted picture of the effects of liberty and subjection on society.

'It is truly wonderful how the princes of Germany could have allowed liberty a little nook in Frankfort, the very heart of the country, and where the effects of this freedom are so strangely contrasted with the surrounding poverty. We may account, however, for this phenomenon, by a sufficient knowledge of the character of their subjects. A newly-discovered Minnelied, such as the Nibelungen, will make them forget constitution, liberty, and misery; and though they can exactly tell what sort of government China, Japan, and Siam have, and give an exact account of the mismanagement in these empires, yet it never occurred to them that their own is the very worst of all.

'Frankfort is an ancient and noble city, where a proportionate wealth is diffused through all the classes of society, though their liberty is rather galled by the overweening airs of the Austrian and Prussian sinecure ambassadors. It is the only city in the south of Germany which, besides Vienna, may be said to be rich; and though the greatest part of these riches is in the hands of half-a-dozen Jews, yet they share the spoils, which flow into the gulph of Hebrew subtlety, from the sweat of the brows of the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian slaves. It is a pity that the high character of the Germans and their virtues are so little known, and still less esteemed. There is an intenseness of feeling in the German character, which touches the very heart.

'To an incredible extent of knowledge and enlightenment they unite an unostentatious simplicity and unassuming manners, which bespeak the sterling cast of their minds. What would this nation become, were they allowed only a small degree of civil liberty? A social circle of the better class in Frankfort has a particular charm. Out of fifteen young ladies and as many gentlemen, who meet in a company, there will scarcely be five who are not versed in English literature; and Walter Scott, Moore, and Cowper, are their favourites. The salutations and unshavings are scarcely over, when the knitting-work is resorted to; while one or two are playing on the piano-forte, or reading a favourite novel of the above-mentioned authors. They are interrupted by the tea-party, after which they hasten to the Cecilia Union, an institution highly honourable to the youth of Frankfort. About fifty young ladies of the best families, with as many gentlemen, assemble regularly twice every week, to perform Handel's, Haydn's, Graun's, &c. classical works, under the direction of a musical gentleman of high standing. The salary of this director, (Shelley,) the expenses of the *locals* and of the orchestra, are defrayed by subscription of the members. Only sacred music is here admitted. I heard the Messiah and Haydn's Creation performed, and I do not hesitate to affirm, that although the London performance is more splendid as relates to the orchestra, yet the general impression, produced by these hundred youthful and blooming singers, is far superior to any thing I ever heard.

'The Bohemian peasantry enjoy a certain degree of freedom: they are not the property of their lords, as in Hungary; they may marry, and sell their estates, but are not

allowed to buy a lordship as a domain. From their estates they have to pay double the taxes, in proportion to an equal number of acres possessed by their lords, besides tithes paid to their lords and their parsons, and the performance of menial offices, either for their families, or, if they are possessed of a team, with their horses and cattle. These menial offices are regulated by the Supreme Agrarian Aulic Tribunal, under the superintendence of the Committee of the States of the kingdom. The medium through which they are carried into execution, is the director with his subalterns, a comptroller, a secretary, clerks and beadles. These officers are salaried by him, and subject to the proprietor of the domain, but they are, at the same time, answerable to the Government. The director collects and delivers the taxes to the chief town of the circle. He is the means of carrying into effect the conscription, of laying out public roads, raising provisions for the army, and directing public measures in regard to the peasantry. He constitutes the immediate or first political tribunal to which the peasant applies. In case he abuses his power, the peasant is allowed to appeal to the second and higher tribunal, the captain of the circle, who holds the rank of councillor of the Government, or colonel of a regiment, resides in the chief town of the circle, and has four commissaries, with a number of clerks. The third tribunal, to which a peasant may resort, is the Government of the kingdom, headed by the Supreme Burggrave as president, who has under him a vice-president and thirty counsellors. The fourth tribunal, to which a peasant has access, is the *Aulic Chancellerie*, under the immediate direction of the Minister of the Interior; the last, the Emperor with his State Council, of which he is president—Prince Metternich, vice-president.

'In the same manner the judicial department is arranged. Every domain has a *justiciar*, a lawyer by profession, who is equally subject to the proprietor of the domains, as far as he is salaried by him. He decides in the first instance, and is assisted by a secretary and several inferior clerks: the litigant parties, if not content with the sentence of the *justiciar*, may resort to the second tribunal, the Court of Appeal, which holds its sittings in the capital of the kingdom, and is composed of a president, a vice-president, and twenty-five counsellors. If the Court of Appeal confirms the sentence of the first instance, no farther appeal is possible: if not, the parties may forward their cause to the supreme Aulic tribunal of Justice at Vienna, headed by the Minister of Justice. The Government has taken care to protect the peasants from the oppression of the lords and their directors; and the captains of the circles or districts, to whom the domains of the lord, as well as the lands of the peasant, are subject, are a sufficient check on the nobility, if they should attempt to encroach on their subjects through their directors. Still, as the number of masters in authority is infinite, and as the poor peasant is subject to all of them, his share of personal freedom, as obtained by Joseph the Second, is little better than real slavery.

'The character of these peasants is such as one might expect from a people depressed by a crowd of masters, every one of whom thinks himself entitled to make them sensible of his superiority. They are slavish, insidious, treacherous! There is a gloom brooding on the countenance of the Bohemian, or, as he prefers to style himself, Czechian, which makes him unfeeling and stubbornly indifferent to your money or your offers; and he rejects every argument except that *ad hominem*. Music is the only thing which clears up his melancholy brow. It is astonishing what a deep sense the Bohemian of the lowest class has of music. The gloomy stare of his countenance brightens; his sharp grey eyes kindle, and beam with fire and sensibility; the whole man is changed. Nothing can exceed the dignity and harmony of the sacred music. When at Raudnitz, we entered a village church, attracted by the long-drawn cadences and the solemn concords of an organ, joined by the voices of the whole congregation. The melancholy air of the music, the sadness so visibly expressed in the countenances of the singers, gave to the whole an interesting character, which it would be difficult to describe.

'The Slavonian nations, Russians, Polanders, and Bohemians, are celebrated for their musical talents, especially the *malin* tunes, and their romantic turn. There is hardly any people more inclined to the marvellous, and more fond of tales, than the Bohemians. Without being very superstitious, they dwell with rapture on the deeds of their ancestors. They know by tradition the history of their first dukes—Czech Krocko, of his three daughters, and of the founder of their dynasty, Premist. They will show the traveller, on his passage from Toplitz to Prague, near Welwar, a solitary barren mountain, where one of their first dukes

and warriors with 500 of his followers lies asleep, waiting for the thunderclap which is to rouse him, and lay open the doors of his prison, from whence he will sally forth to deliver his countrymen from the yoke of the foreigners, whom they call *hiemezy*, intruders. They have their Amazons, and will show you near Prague the ruins of a castle, once the seat of these heroines: but what excites more than any thing else their enthusiasm, is their King Charles the Fourth, son of John, who fell in the battle of Cressy. There will scarcely be found a peasant who knows not exactly the sayings and doings of this excellent prince, while one would ask two millions and a-half of them in vain who was the father of the present Emperor!"

The account given in the following passage of the system pursued in the education of the Austrian youth, is well worth perusing:

'As the system of studies, as it is called, is throughout the Austrian empire the same, it may not be superfluous to give a succinct idea of it. There are, besides the university, three Lyceums, or colleges, and twenty-five Gymnasiums, or Latin schools, in Bohemia. The university has, besides, a rector magnificus, whose office, however, is a mere title, and who is chosen annually with four directors, two of whom, the directors of philosophy and of divinity, are clergymen. The director of the Gymnasiums and of the Lyceums, is also a priest. They are under the control of a councillor of the Government, to whom they make their reports. The elementary schools are equally under the supreme direction of a clergyman, who is in the same manner answerable to the Government. Private teaching is not allowed. The youth, after having run through the elementary schools, passes into the Latin schools, or Gymnasiums; in which he is instructed for the ensuing four years, in the Latin language and in religion; the two following years he reads extracts from Latin authors, and the elements of the Greek language; two hours in the week are allotted to religion, mathematics, geography, and history. Each Gymnasium has one prefect, six professors, and a teacher of religion. In six years the youth has completed his gymnastic studies, and is advanced to the university. There he hears, for the first year, extracts of philosophy, religion, history, mathematics, the elements of the Greek language; again, in the second year, the same, with the exception of mathematics, for which physic and astronomy are substituted. In the third year, he reads the history of the German Empire, and aesthetics. The students are not allowed to choose for themselves; the professors or lecturers are all obliged to pursue the same course. These three years being passed, the youth chooses either law, divinity, or medicine. In the former two courses, he continues his studies four, in the latter five years. The whole course of studies takes thus thirteen, and in medicine, fourteen years. The school-books for all these different classes, except medicine, are compiled in Vienna, under the superintendence of the Aulic commission of studies. They are subject to such alterations as a new created councillor of the court thinks fit to suggest, according to his own or his Emperor's notions. These school-books are the most barren and stupid extracts which ever left the printing press. The professors are bound, under penalty of losing their places, to adhere literally to these skeletons.

'At Easter, and towards the close of August, the youth is examined: if his answers prove satisfactory, he is admitted at the beginning of the next year into a higher class; if otherwise, he is detained till he knows by heart his lesson, and then advanced. A young man who has gone through the academical course of these studies, knows a little of every thing, but on the whole nothing. He has regularly forgotten in the succeeding course what he had learned by heart in the preceding. A free exercise of the mental powers, a literary range, is absolutely impossible; nay, against the instructions of the professors. The youth, during the time of his studies, is watched with the closest attention. His professors are ex-officio spies. Six times in the year he has to confess himself to his teachers of religion! His predilections, inclinations, his good and bad qualities, every movement is observed and registered in their catalogues; one of which is sent to Vienna, the other to the Government, the third deposited in the school archives. This observation increases as the youth advances into the higher classes, and a strict vigilance is paid to his reading; trials are made with classic authors, his opinion is elicited about characters such as Brutus, Cato, and the account thereof faithfully inserted. If the youth applies to law, the scrutiny becomes still more vigorous, and his principles about the natural rights of man and of Government are extorted under a thousand shapes and pretences.

'The youth, having finished his academical course, whether he be a lawyer, or a divine, is entirely in the hands of the Government. His past life and conduct serve his superiors as a guide. Has he given the least cause of suspicion, shown the least *penchant* towards liberal ideas? then he may be sure that the higher his talents, the less his capacity to serve his Emperor, or to obtain a license as an attorney. Should he apply to the Government for a non-commissioned office, his immediate superiors become again his watchmen. An unguarded word is sufficient not only to preclude his advancement, but to deprive him even of his station. He cannot expect indulgence or forbearance on the part of his superiors; it would be looked upon as a connivance, and if repeated, deprive them of their places.'

We conclude our extracts with the following:

'Francis is thought to be a mere instrument in the hands of Metternich. This is not the case. It is a similarity of characters and views which exists between himself and his prime-minister; he has found out his man, and therefore he adopts his measures and adheres to them. That baneful offspring of a bad conscience, the secret police, is entirely in his hands: he is the chief director of it, and it forms great part of the immense load which lies on his shoulders. So well known is his fondness for secret information, that the vilest of his subjects, who would not dare to pass the threshold of a respectable citizen, approaches, unhesitatingly, his Majesty, provided he brings this venomous stuff. This species of information extends over his whole Empire,—the cottage of the peasant, the dwelling of the citizen, the tavern of the landlord, the palace of the nobleman: no place is exempt from his hirelings. He keeps a regular account of his civil, military and ecclesiastical officers and dignitaries, from the governor down to the clerk. His excellent memory assists him a great deal. According to these secret informations, his officers are nominated. Attachment to his Imperial person is the first requisite, which is always expressed as the reason of the appointment in the diploma. Of the 60,000 public officers, he himself nominates the principal ministers, presidents, governors, counsellors, assessors, directors; as well as generals, colonels, archbishops, bishops, and canons,—and all the directors and professors of universities and colleges. In case of a vacancy, the department in which it happens proposes three members. Their merits are weighed according to the prevalent notions, and they are laid before the higher tribunal; there they are again investigated, and either confirmed or changed; and finally laid before the Emperor. Till the year 1816, the Emperor generally chose the first proposed; an exception was a thing unheard of. This is, of course, changed at present. If he has the necessary information respecting the proposed candidates, he appoints one of them to the vacancy; if not, he sends for secret information into the province, where the officer to be appointed lives. If the tidings respecting the public and private character of the individual do not answer the views of his Majesty, one of his ready-kept favourites is nominated to the vacancy. The number of these public officers is infinite, and certainly three times greater than that of any other country, owing to the tedious, and even ridiculous, manner in which public business is carried on. Not an old bench in a school-room can be repaired 800 miles from the capital, without its being approved of by the captain of the circle, an account sent from thence to the government of the province, then to the Aulic Tribunal, farther on to the State Council, which lays it before his Majesty. This egregious manner of doing business has caused such an immense number of writings and writers, or public officers, as amount to a large army. Every one of his subjects is of course anxious to share the public money, and his zeal has seconded the expected subserviency and anxiety to comply with the wishes of the Emperor. Francis may be said to have trained his subjects, during the thirty-four years of his reign, to a blind obedience, which has absorbed principle, honour, and all noble sentiments. One is really horror-struck at the sight of the moral havoc caused by the short-sighted simplicity of a prince who, in order to bear down all dispute of his right and supremacy, has, in fact, overturned honour, morality, religion, and principles. Right is in Austria what pleases the Emperor,—his will; wrong, what displeases him.

'If the Austrians have not yet become what, if this system should continue ten years longer, they must necessarily be,—the vilest and most perfidious people on the face of the earth, it is certainly not the fault of Francis. The education of the youth, public stations, secret policy, every thing combines here, to produce

political and moral degradation. And this system of degradation he carries on in that plain, coarse, and downright matter-of-fact manner with which a cross master disposes of his house affairs. Compared with the roughness with which Francis handles his subjects, by the mere plainness of his manner, the tyranny of Napoleon was a trifle. He incarcerates bishops, as well as princes and counts, just as he pleases; and should his students murmur or rise against their professors, they are sent as private soldiers to the frontiers of Turkey,—all in the most parental manner. There is in this prince a strange mixture of unassuming simplicity and of despotic haughtiness, of a truly jesuitical craftiness with an apparent frankness, of the coarsest and most ungrateful egotism with an apparently kind-hearted indulgence. If you see him driving his old-fashioned, green calèche and two, dressed in a brown, shabby cabotte, with a corresponding hat, nodding friendly to his right and left, or good-humouredly speaking to his Grand Chamberlain, Count Wobna, you would think it impossible that in him there is the least pride. Again, when you see sovereigns and princes approaching him with that awe and shyness which mark a decided distrust, and he himself just as plain, even as gross, as if he spoke to the least of his subjects, you feel convinced that there is occasion for being on your guard, against an openness which might send you in the plainest way into the dungeons of Munkatsch, Komom, or Spielberg. He is certainly not a hypocrite, but there is a wiliness and an innate deceit in him, which baffles the keenest eye, and really deceived Napoleon. Even his own family trust him little; and though his intercourse with them is plain, and they mix on familiar terms, yet they always keep their distance. Neither his brother, nor the Crown Prince, is allowed the least interference in public business, except what is allotted to them.'

We may safely say, after the above passages, that 'Austria as it is' is highly creditable to the good sense of its author, who has comprised in a very small compass a most interesting series of useful observations. We should be happy in accompanying such an acute and intelligent companion through the other States of the Continent.

MONTGOMERY'S POEM.

The Omnipresence of the Deity, a Poem, by Robert Montgomery. Pp. 196. Maunders. London, 1828.

MR. MONTGOMERY has, we believe, already appeared before the public, though in a shape of more questionable propriety, and less poetical gravity. That he is a young man of considerable talent, and well deserving of attention, is impossible to doubt; and we have, therefore, been led to expect a more than ordinary degree of pleasure in the perusal of his present publication. The subject of the poem was one offering an almost awful advantage to a powerful and elevated mind; but it had its dangers also, and those which few writers could entirely avoid. The universe in all its magnificence and beauty lay before him; spirit and matter, human feelings and celestial intelligences offered themselves to his contemplation, and he was at liberty to range through every grade of conceivable existence. But this extent and variety of subject was almost certain to lead the author into those generalities of description which are the least fitted to display a true vigour of thought and imagination. Whatever faults there are in the construction of Mr. Montgomery's poem may be attributed to this circumstance; and having merely observed, therefore, that he has, in one or two instances, descended to a sort of poetical common-place, unworthy his genius, we proceed to the general style of the work.

It is a pleasure in the present day to meet with a poem written in the strong and harmonious metre so successfully employed by Pope and Dryden, and at a later period by Campbell and Rogers. There is no other altogether so well adapted to the genius of our language in long compositions, and it is no small praise to Mr. Montgomery, to say that he has made use of it with great success, and that the general structure of his versification is both powerful and musical.

In the matter and substance of the poem, originality and strength of talent are strongly visible; much beauty of description and pure feeling, a glowing and striking imagery characterize its general style; but we must enable our readers to judge for themselves. We give the following as a specimen of the tenderer parts of the poem:

' Say ye, whose hearts unclouded can enjoy
The bliss of life, without the world's alloy,
What can illumine their melancholy way,
Where want begins, and misery crowns the day?—
Blest be yon viewless Comforter on high,
No lot's too lowly for His pitying eye!
He looks upon the sleepless couch of woe,
And bids the dying light of hope to glow;
Unarms the peril, heals the wounded mind,
And turns each feeling home to fate resign'd!

' At wintry eve, when piercing night-winds blow,
Tint his wan cheek, and drift his locks of snow,
As oft the vagrant shivers through the street,
No voice to pity, and no hand to greet—
With many a pause he marks that window-pane,
Whose twinkling blaze recalls his home again!
Illusive mem'ry warms his widowed heart,
Till real woes in fancied bliss depart;
And one by one, as happier days appear,
To each he pays the homage of a tear;
Tho' homeless, still he loves home's joyous glare,
Looks up to heaven, and feels his home is there!

The following is of a different kind; the line printed in italics strikes us as very fine:

' Let Crime entomb herself within the heart,
And day-light veil her with deceitful art,
Darkness shall all th' illusive web unwind—
That hell of conscience to a guilty mind!

' At deep dead night, when not an earthly sound
Jars on the brooding air that sleeps around;
When all the drossy feelings of the day,
Touch'd by the wand of Truth, dissolve away,
Unhallow'd Guilt shall in her bosom feel
A rack too fierce for language to reveal;
A sense unutt'able within the soul
Of Him pervading—living through the whole!
On ev'ry limb shall creeping terror come,
Lock her white lips, and strike her anguish dumb;
Vengeance shall utter a tremendous yell,
And Fancy flutter round the gulph of Hell!

' Not so comes Darkness to the good man's breast,
When Night brings on the holy hour of rest;
Tired of the day, a pillow laps his head,
While heavenly vigils watch around the bed;
His spirit bosom'd on the God of All,
Peace to the hour! whate'er the night befall:
Then pleasing Memory unrolls her chart,
To raise, refine, and regulate the heart:
Exulting boyhood, and its host of smiles—
Next busy manhood battling with its toils,
Delights and dreams that made the heart run o'er,
The love forgotten, and the friends no more—
The panorama of past life appears,
Warms his pure mind, and melts it into tears;
Till, like a shutting flower, the senses close,
And on him lies the beauty of repose.

We should gladly, did our limits permit, give some of the vivid and sublime lines that close the poem; but we must content ourselves with pointing them out to the future attention of our readers. We should be failing in our duty, however, did we not caution Mr. Montgomery against the occasional bad taste he has suffered to appear in his present production. We could present many instances of this, such, for example, as speaking of the Almighty's 'dreadful tone,' and other similar expressions; but the most serious fault is his manner of personifying the attribute on which the poem is founded; thus, in the following line, a violence is done to good sense:

' And felt an Omnipresence round him thrown.'

And the next is even worse:

' And some vast presence rocks from pole to pole.'

With these exceptions to the general good taste and ability of the poem, we consider it as deserving a great share of public attention and applause.

THE VISCOMTE D'ARLINCOURT.

Ismaïe ou la Mort et l'Amour, Roman-poème. Par M. LE VICOMTE D'ARLINCOURT. 2 vols. 12mo. Ponthieu, Paris; Duleau, Londres, 1828.

IN the controversy which, since the commencement of the nineteenth century, has been constantly maintained in France between the advocates of the classical and romantic styles, it is impossible to arrive at any accurate decision until each of these styles shall be properly defined,—until the authors who range themselves under their respective banners shall be named, and until the works which form the models of these two different classes of literature shall be designated, and submitted to the test of public criticism.

If it is a truth, admitted by the literary world in general, that languages, like nations, possess a genius essentially different from each other; it is also true that people in their turn differ in taste and manners, according to the state of ignorance or civilization of the age in which they live.

One language requires great precision, another accommodates itself to a certain degree of irregularity. Writers in one tongue are prodigal of metaphor and imagery, whilst in another they are careful to render their ideas with the greatest possible simplicity, and studiously avoid all unnecessary ornament. The very same style is classical in England, and romantic in France. The sublime Milton, the unequal Shakspeare, the fantastic Schiller, have written in the taste of their different nations and of their contemporaries; but neither of them would have been able to form a school amongst the writers of the age of Louis XIV.; and we even doubt, had their productions appeared, for the first time, at the present day, whether they would have obtained that admiration which the world has now for centuries been in the habit of according to them.

Before the time of Racine, of Pascal, and of Bossuet, French poets, giving themselves up entirely to the vivacity of their imaginations, produced works less rich in traits of genius, but quite as bold as those of the writers in the reigns of Charles I. and Elizabeth.

In their wandering course, they paid but little regard to the improvement of the language, and had almost rendered it unintelligible. Malherbe, Racine, and Boileau appeared: they assigned rules for the art of writing; they prescribed limits to imagination; and from that moment France ceased to possess a literature of her own; all her glory was confined to copying exactly the Greek and Latin poets, and to servilely imitating the writers of another age and of another country.

These shadows of antiquity, which delighted the Court of the luxurious Louis XIV. and of his successors, could not long continue to please the more rational generation of the nineteenth century. Chateaubriand commenced the reform, but in introducing into his early compositions foreign expressions, the marvellous and exaggerated style of Schlegel, or the language of the inhabitants of the shores of the Jordan and of the Mississippi, in making his style laboured, in lengthening his phrases, in overcharging them with unnatural imagery, with words conveying no ideas, and in introducing into the French language the extravagance of an Oriental imagination, he believed that he was forming for his country a new school; instead of which he was only corrupting its taste.

His first works created a great sensation; which is the case with all extraordinary things. 'Le roi des épouvantements.—Le célibataire des mondes.—Les guerres du grand lievre contre Machimantou, génie du mal.—Les morassines de peau de rat musqué, avec du poil de porc-épic.—Les secrets des mélancolies que la lune aime à raconter aux grands chênes.—La vierge des derniers amours.—Le génie des airs qui secoue sa chevelure bleue embaumée de la Santeur des pins, dans un ciel gris de perles;—and a thousand other similar

phrases, entirely devoid of reason or sense, for a moment dazzled the multitude; and less talented writers, such as Charles Nodier, Bonald, Marchangy, and d'Arlincourt, mistaking the momentary éclat of these fallacious beauties for the halo of glory, modelled themselves on these very errors. M. Chateaubriand was possessed of genius, he abandoned the false tract he had entered, and remained original and romantic; but he ceased to be absurd, whilst his disciples still continued to be so.

Amongst these, the Viscount d'Arlincourt has particularly distinguished himself. His 'Solitaire,' and his 'Rénégat,' have made a great noise; and amongst us especially have met with a great number of admirers. Before speaking of the romance of 'Ismaïe,' let us analyze the celebrated 'Rénégat,' in order to give an idea of the refined and superior taste of our countrymen.

Cladimir, the son of one of the kings of France, after having seen his family assassinated by Geoffroy, his throne usurped by Charles Martel, his most faithful friends killed in fighting for his cause, and his mistress expire at his side in the agonies of hunger, is exposed to the most frightful death by being abandoned in a frail bark to the relentless fury of the waves, but by an extraordinary chance is rescued by a Musulman vessel, and conveyed to Spain, where he abjures the religion of Christ for that of the Arabian prophet.

After performing innumerable warlike exploits, he is selected Chief of the Saracens, and makes the south of France the scene of his victories and of his vengeance. He is 'l'homme du carnage'—l'homme de la clémence—l'homme terrible—l'homme invincible—he is, in fact, at the same moment, 'l'homme du néant'—and l'homme de la victoire. A convent of hospitable sisters, situated at the bottom of the Cevennes, had, until then, escaped the Saracens. Amongst them is the Princess of Lodère, l'inspirée des Gaules, la fille des merveilles, la femme des prodiges, la vierge de Segorin, l'épouse de Fontania, l'ange d'Augustina—in a word, the beautiful Ezilda, who had hoped here to have found a secure asylum from des farouches mécréans. But, conducted by the Rénégat, they surround the sacred retreat. 'Chaque religieuse agenouillée demeure glacée d'épouvante et l'air manque à sa poitrine défaillante comme à celle de l'infortuné qui cherche à prendre sa dernière respiration sous la hache levée du bourreau.' They are in momentary expectation of death, when suddenly, Ezilda, quitting the temple, presents herself to the infidels, and rescues her companions from the fury of the Musulmans. The renegat has fled, but he has seen 'La femme des prodiges', and the thirst for carnage has ceased within him; Ezilda has triumphed, but she has beheld l'homme terrible, and 'de même que l'œil des serpents de l'Amérique engourdit les sens du voyageur; Agobar rénégal lui paraît un monstre, Agobar, chef de Guerriers lui semble presque un immortel.

Ezilda immediately abandons the convent of Cevennes, surrounded by her companions. She pursues her route silently and mournfully. Agobar constantly presents himself to her imagination, such as he appeared before her, 'L'œil infernal, la prunelle sanglante, le front marqué en caractère de feu du sceau de la réprobation, énergique comme le cri du désespoir, sauvage comme la ronce du désert, sinistre comme la pensée du néant et cependant plus beau que l'Antinoüs des Romains non moins vigoureux que le vainqueur du minotaure, aussi colossal que l'Ajazz de l'armée Grecque, et en sa seule personne réunissant toutes les perfections humaines des demi dieux de l'antiquité.' Dissatisfied with herself without knowing why, 'La fille des merveilles,' interrogates her soul, 'mais l'âme illustre étrangère née dans les cieus, puis jetée captive et dépaycée en une enveloppe périssable souvent ne se comprend plus sur la terre, soit que l'immortelle banie s'abreuve ici bas à la coupe enchantée des plaisirs, soit qu'elle traîne

le fardeau des misères humaines, elle passe mystérieuse au milieu des terrestres voies et disparaît inexplicable d'elle-même et de ses semblables sous les voiles de l'éternité; thus, 'les flots agités de sa pensée erraient encore sur sa pénible position, comme ces blanches nuées inconstantes qui courent chassées par les vents sur les masses noires d'un orage,' when Ezilda and her trembling companions arrive at the miraculous rock. They have escaped the Musulman sword, but another and more terrible evil threatens them; the horrors of hunger consume them; nothing but death presents itself to their view, when 'L'inspirée des Gaules' resolves on abandoning the miraculous rock, in search of assistance for her unhappy companions. 'A travers mille obstacles; elle se fraie une sortie de ce séjour de mort, et du sein des ruines, à la clarté des étoiles, sa lampe à la main, seule sur une plage inconnue elle s'élève blanche et demi voilée, comme une fille des tombeaux, comme un image fantastique des ténèbres et du cahos;' and, by the most extraordinary chance, finds herself in the palace of Agobar at the very moment in which traitors are conspiring the death of the chief, whom she rescues from their blows, and receives, as the price of so great a service, the deliverance of her companions. As for herself, 'Vierge des amours, elle doit être l'héroïne des combats; devant elle est une carrière de périls, à ses pieds est un immense abîme; mais Dieu lui parle, et rafermit son courage, et la foi qui sur le gouffre de la mort jette l'arche de l'espérance, l'isthme de l'immortalité, la foi, fille de l'Eternel, recouvrant à ses yeux chaque écueil son manteau religieux, lui trace une céleste voie le long des précipices mêmes, et sans d'autre force que l'espérance, d'autre éloquence que la pitié, d'autres armes que la prière, et d'autre égide que le ciel.'

Armed from head to foot, and followed by some thousands of mountaineers, Ezilda marches towards the enemy; and it is when, in the temple, she is returning thanks to God for her victories, that she again meets Agobar,—secures him from the vengeance of the Christians,—recognizes in him the son of Thierry, the lover to whom her father had affianced her, and to whom she shortly after offers her hand, and the throne of France; but 'quoique la voix d'Ezilda semble une harmonie céleste destinée par le Créateur à l'accomplissement de quelque œuvre mystérieuse, et son sourire, un rapide aperçu de l'éternelle félicité, à Lutèce le trône dégradé n'est plus qu'un catafalque royal, que le chef Musulman dédaigne, n'ambitionnant que la robe sanglante du carnage.' He refuses to betray Spain, and to return to the service of a God, a faith, a people, and a country which he has abandoned. He loves Ezilda, but he resists her prayers,—'Fille du malheur! fiancée du desespoir! lui dit-il, suis moi, sous les tonnerres, sur les abîmes, livre moi ta main, je t'épouse, mais laisse moi combattre les chrétiens, race ennemie de l'humanité et ta divinité, monstre créé par la démence!' he is desirous of inducing his mistress to accompany him, 'mais ces paroles au cœur d'Ezilda ont fait rebouler l'espérance.' She, however, withstands the solicitations of the 'Rénégat,' and he again returns to battle.

An engagement takes place between the Christians and the Infidels; the victorious Agobar refuses the crown, which is offered him by his followers. Shortly after this, the victim of calumny, abandoned by his troops, condemned to death, and covered with wounds, he is discovered by some of his former servants, and is on the point of being delivered by them into the hands of his mortal enemy, the ferocious Athime, when he is again saved by his guardian-angel, Ezilda, who, having in her turn been accused of sorcery, is flying from the punishment which has been awarded by Charles Martel to her virtue and to her noble actions:

'Un jour emporté par sa fougueuse ivresse, le Rénégat presse la vierge dans ses bras; déjà la volupté les environne.' Nothing short of a mi-

racle could have saved Ezilda. . . . And a miracle presents itself. . . . 'La croix de la vierge a, comme le contact d'un talisman, triomphé de toutes les magies de l'amour sensuel, et brisé tous les enchantemens de la volupté. Clodomir, m'aimes-tu, s'écrie l'inspirée des Gaules?' And on the affirmative reply of the son of Thierry, notwithstanding the aversion he entertains for the Christian faith, the union of the two lovers is on the following day to be blessed by the priest of Christ. 'Hélas! qu'est souvent l'instant du bonheur? . . . Celui qui précède les regrets, l'avant-courreur paré de la souffrance; l'épouse de Fontania s'est endormie dans l'espérance des félicités, elle se réveillera dans l'amertume des douleurs.' The noise of arms has recalled Agobar to battle. The defeat of the Christians summons Ezilda to victory;—she has vanquished the Infidels, but in the heat of the battle, hurried by her steed towards the monument of Fabius, she there finds the unfortunate Agobar, who has been wounded by Athime, bathed in blood, and is just in time to receive his last breath. The conclusion of Ezilda's life follows of course;—she takes the veil, and expires in a convent.

Is it necessary to make any remarks on the eccentricity and improbability of this book of M. D'Arlinecourt? How is it possible to feel interested in a tale so void of reason and sense? How is it possible to believe events which bear no appearance of truth? How can one take any pleasure in characters and descriptions so perfectly unnatural? How complete the reading of a book of two volumes, written in such an affected and turgid style, and so full of inversions?

Such, however, are the rhapsodies which have gone through five editions in France, which, crossing the channel have obtained here the admiration of our fair countrywomen,—which have been lauded by our Journals and Magazines, and which have been emphatically adorned with the name of *romantic*; whilst in reality they belong to no school, unless it be to that of the absurd.

The Roman-poème, entitled '*La Mort et l'Amour*,' which we have just read, is in the same manner, nothing more than a tissue of absurdities. A man, habited in black, whose features, wrinkled with age, still presented the remains of great beauty, presents himself at the Castle of the Viscount D'Arlinecourt, and drawing from his pocket an immense roll of parchment, commits it to our author, that he may edit the mysterious and astonishing history. 'How would you wish that I should write?' asks the Viscount. 'In verse.' 'Would you like a drama?' 'No,' &c.—Vol. i. p. 9. The poetry of the noble Viscount is in fact neither prose nor verse, and his *roman-poème* really belongs to neither of these two classes; it is a continual phantasmagoria, in which Philip Augustus and Richard Cœur de Lion, Blondel and Oscar, magicians and ghosts, pictures of battles and scenes of the tomb, are successively presented to our view.

Such absurd compositions are almost unworthy of criticism. Ismailie is even worse than the Rénégat; the improbability of the story is, if possible, still greater; and its verses are even more detestable than the worst prose.

ANGELO'S REMINISCENCES.

Reminiscences of Henry Angelo, with Memoirs of his late Father and Friends; including numerous original Anecdotes and various Traits of the most celebrated Characters that have flourished during the last Eighty years. 8vo. pp. 510. Colburn. London. 1828.

This is another of those volumes of octogenarian gossip with which we have been amused during the last two years, and, though containing a considerable portion of curious information, is far inferior to its predecessors both in interest and ability. The name of the author is one which will be readily recognized by all the survivors of the 'Old School;' and we regret to find that so few incidents of his *own* life and experience are

mingled with his sketchy portraits of his contemporaries. The work abounds with illustrative traits of almost all the musicians, painters, poets, players, dramatists, quacks, architects, and artists, who have flourished during the last fifty years; but, unfortunately, his anecdotes in general are *devoid of point*: they are, no doubt, very characteristic; but, at the same time, they contain little which we did not know before, and less which was worth repeating. Mr. Angelo seems more deficient in observation than in memory; and yet we cannot avoid thinking that the mind which could retain so many trifling incidents, should have been capable of *discovering* in his associates more which was worthy of preservation. He seems to have had a peculiar taste for painting and the fine arts; and the greater portion of the present volume (*he promises a second*) is occupied with anecdotes of Gainsborough, West, Rowlandson, Morland, and a host of others; many of these are highly attractive, but the greater part want piquancy, and several have before appeared in print. One, which relates to the unfortunate Morland, is new, and, at the same time, characteristic.

'Morland I remember seeing when he was a boy. His father, who painted in crayons, and was but an indifferent artist, nevertheless knew much more of the various processes of the art, than most of his competitors; hence, what his own capacity wanted, as applying this knowledge of the science in his own works, was amply compensated by the superior genius and quick capacity of his fond pupil. The father, proud of having produced such a son, naturally boasted the precocity of his abilities; but this adulation too soon laid the foundation of that insolence and self-will, which the young painter cherished and indulged as he approached manhood, and was the main cause of his profligacy, premature mental and bodily decay, and ultimate ruin.'

'As an instance of his juvenile insolence and self-importance, I remember being told by the late Nathaniel Hone, the enamel painter, that he, calling one morning on the elder Morland, to see some copies by his son, from certain pictures of the old masters; the father, in his usual strain, very injudiciously began lauding his abilities, and on leaving the room to fetch some of the copies in question, exclaimed, "Is not my son a hopeful boy?" At this period he had just entered his thirteenth year. Attired in the costume of a man of twenty, in buck-skins and boots, he was standing, with great importance, with the flaps of his coat on his arms, his hands in his breeches' pockets, and his back to the fire.'

'Thus left alone with him, Mr. Hone, who had known him from his infancy, said, "Well, master George, and how do you employ yourself now?" "In kissing the maids, d—mme!" was the urchin's reply, accompanied with a look of the most supercilious contempt. On the elder Morland's return, Hone observed, "I have been talking with George during your absence, Mr. Morland, and certainly he is—a hopeful boy."

The author seems to have been intimate with the celebrated Dr. Wolcott, the talented, but disagreeable, Peter Pindar; and a singular trait is given of his unsocial habits in society.

Peter Pindar, however strange it may seem, though so eminently satirical with his pen, was not emulous to shine as a wit in his colloquial intercourse, either with strangers or his most intimate associates. Indeed, his usual manner exhibited so little of that character which strangers had imagined of the writer of his lively satires, that they were commonly disappointed.

'I could name a motherly lady, the wife of a player, at whose house he formerly was accustomed to pass an evening, who used to say, "Dr. Wolcott's wit seems to lie in the bowl of a tea-spoon." I could not guess the riddle, until one evening, seated at Mitchell's, I observed, that each time Peter replenished his glass goblet with cogniac and water, that, in breaking the sugar, the corners of his lips were curled into a satisfactory smile, and he began some quaint story—as if, indeed, the new libation begot a new thought.'

'Determined to prove the truth of the discovery, which I fancied I had made, one night, after supper, at my own residence in Bolton-row, he being one, among a few social guests, I made my promised experiment. One of the party, who delighted in a little practical joke, namely, Wigstead of merry memory, being in the secret, he came provided with some small, square pieces of alabaster. Peter Pindar's glass waning fast,

Wigstead contrived to slip them into a sugar-basin, provided for the purpose, when the doctor reaching the hot water, and pouring in the brandy, Wigstead handed him the sugar-tongs, and then advanced the basin of alabaster. "Thank you, boy," said Peter, putting in five or six pieces, and taking his tea-spoon, began stirring as he commenced his story.

"Unsuspecting of the trick, he proceeded, "Well, Sirs,—and so the old parish priest. What I tell you (then his spoon was at work) happened when I was in that infernally hot place, Jamaica, (then another stir.) Sir, he was the fattest man on the island; (then he pressed the alabaster;) yes, damme, Sir; and when the thermometer at ninety-five, was dissolving every other man, this old slouching—drawing son of the Church got fatter and fatter, until, Sir—(curse the sugar!) some devil black enchanter has bewitched it. By —, Sir, this sugar is part and parcel of that old pot-bellied parson—it will never melt;" and he threw the contents of the tumbler under the grate. We burst into laughter, and our joke lost us the conclusion of the story. Wigstead skillfully slipped the mock sugar out of the way, and the doctor, taking another glass, never suspected the frolic."

The *Reminiscences*, however, are, by far, the most amusing portions of Mr. Angelo's book; and the latter pages of his volume will be found to contain recollections of 'fifty years ago,' equally interesting to those who remember their occurrence, and attractive to those of the present generation. Though deficient in power, this book will particularly engage the attention of all who have once known the persons, or retain a kind recollection of the characters of whom he treats.

NOTICES OF ENGLISH BOOKS.

One Hundred Fables, Original and Selected. By James Northcote, R.A. embellished with 280 Engravings on Wood. pp. 272. S. Lawford. London, 1828.

This is a very beautiful book of fables, and does credit to the good feelings and ability of the excellent artist who has employed his talents in producing it. The highly finished wood engravings from designs by Mr. Northcote, give an interest to this publication not to be found in others of the kind; but it is not for this only it merits our praise: the fables themselves are generally very good, and the original ones not the least excellent of the number. The only fault we have to remark in them, is that the moral is too studiously and openly obtruded, instead of being left for the natural attention of the reader to discover it.

The Morning and Evening Sacrifice; or Prayers for Private Persons and Families. pp. 404. Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1828.

AMONG the many devotional compendiums with which we are acquainted, we are disposed to give the one before us a very respectable rank. With that elevation of thought which becomes the intention of prayer, it unites the full expression of human necessities and hopes; and keeping clear of that error which we so often see committed, of making prayers sermons instead of simple addresses to the Deity, it is in many parts very strongly imbued with the purest and most sublime Christian doctrine.

Q. Horatii Flacci Opera: with an Ordo and verba Translation. By J. Stirling, D.D. Revised by P. Nuttall, D.D. 4 vols. Ward. London, 1828.

THIS is a good reprint of Dr. Stirling's interlineary edition of Horace. We are ourselves, by no means, convinced of the utility of such helps in the study of the classics, wherever assistance of a different kind can be had; but to persons endeavouring to acquire a knowledge of Latin without the help of a master, (and we believe there are many humble retired students of this class,) the publication we are noticing will form a very acceptable offering.

The Table-Book. By WILLIAM HONE. Vol. 2. Svo. London, 1828. Hunt and Clarke.

This is a publication similar in character to the 'Every-Day Book,' which was so universally read and relished. The plan is of the most comprehensive kind; including original information and remark, anecdote, bon mot, poetry; in a word, it would be more difficult to say what it does not include, than what it does. This kind of melange is agreeable enough, the more especially as it is diversified with a number of spirited wood cuts; and the known ability of the compiler is a pledge that the most is made both of space and means.

NOTICE.

TO THE READERS OF THE ATHENÆUM.

THE increased and increasing demand for Literary Productions in England, is one of the most unequivocal proofs that could be cited of the more general diffusion of Education throughout the country, and the consequent desire of knowledge in which this demand originates. After passing from the Annual Registers and Quarterly Reviews of our predecessors, to the Monthly and Weekly Journals of our own times, advancing at each step towards a closer and more frequent inter-communication of thought between mind and mind,—the reading portion of the public (which may now be said to include all who are above the condition of the merely labouring classes) is still impatient for a more rapid succession of the pleasures which they derive from this inexhaustible source. There is, it is true, an approximation towards this, in the number and variety of the Weekly Journals that appear:—the readers of the Tuesday's *ATHENÆUM*, seeking, in the interval between its successive numbers, to allay their thirst from the pages of the Saturday's *GAZETTES*. As it must almost necessarily happen, however, they are sure to find in these a large portion, both of the Reviews and of other Literary Intelligence, applying only to the same books and the same facts which had been analysed and detailed before. It is clear, therefore, that it is but an imperfect mode of attaining to the desired end; and that it would be much more agreeable to all the readers of Periodical Journals, if they could be assured of entire and perfect novelty in each succeeding Work; or, in other words, if they were certain of finding, in the Publications issued at the latter end of the week, neither the same extracts of Books, nor the same facts of Literary Intelligence, which they had already gone over in the Publications of the earlier part of the same period.

To effect this object completely, and to meet the increased demand, of which every day furnishes such abundant proofs, 'THE *ATHENÆUM*' will, from this date, be issued *twice* a-week: namely, on Tuesdays and Fridays. The additional space and increased frequency of appearance thus secured, will enable it to embrace all that is interesting or important, in the Reviews of Books, or original communications of a more general character;—so as to render the readers of 'THE *ATHENÆUM*' almost independent of every other source of Literary Intelligence, and make it by far the most rapid, most comprehensive, and at the same time the most varied and original Periodical of the day. The Eighth Number of THE *ATHENÆUM* will therefore appear on Friday next, and be continued without interruption on the Tuesday and Friday mornings of each succeeding week, in the confident hope of this improvement being acceptable to all its readers.

LINES

Written amongst the Jura Mountains, just after hearing of the death of Mr. Canning.

POPULAR, methinks, as now I turn my ear
To list the sighing sound amid thy leaves,
As from the hills far off—anon—now near,
It comes by fits, thy trembling limbs it heaves;
Methinks thy voice sobs like a mourner's, when,
Solemn and sad, it breaks from yonder glen:
Heard in Mount Jura, in her woods, the vale,
Which saddens, like Britannia, at the tale:
'Canning's no more!'—upon whose gifted tongue,
Applauding senates rapturously hung,
Mourn it, ye mountains, where his spirit roams;
Raise high your voices in your rocky homes:
Let every hill, and these most near the sky,
Too near for man, to Jura's voice reply;
Each vine-clad valley, let it catch the strain;
Ere's far Isle, reverberate again:
For gone is he who would have broke thy chain!

August, 1827.

LA FONTAINE.

THE Fables of La Fontaine deserve well the popularity which they enjoy. The French can thoroughly appreciate their wit. But so peculiar is the vein of humour, which pervades them, and, in many instances, so entirely connected with what is French, that an English reader can rarely comprehend their perfect richness.

From this circumstance, translations of the Fables of La Fontaine are more rare than translations of any other author of equal celebrity. I do not mean translations of single fables, these are common enough, but of the entire work, and the most perfect of them is a complete failure.

Many of the Fables, closely rendered into our language, would lose all their raciness. And, the oftener I have read this delightful author, the more strongly have I felt the difficulty of the attempt to communicate the charm which the perusal imparts.

It is, therefore, more with a view to lead others to the source from which I have frequently drawn personal gratification, that I request you, in each of your future Numbers, (until you or your readers tire of them,) to insert, in order, a Fable of La Fontaine, and an attempt to give it an English dress. The original must please, though the imitation fail.

FABLE PREMIERE.

La Cigale, et la Fourmi.
La cigale, ayant chanté,
Tout l'été,
Se trouva fort dépourvue
Quand la bise fut venue:
Pas un seul petit morceau
De mouche, ou de vermineau!
Elle alla crier famine
Chez la fourmi sa voisine,
La priant de lui prêter
Quelque grain pour subsister
Jusqu'à la saison nouvelle:
Je vous paierai, lui dit-elle,
Avant l'ôt, foi d'animal,
Intérêt et principal.
La fourmi n'est pas prêteuse;
C'est là son moindre défaut:
Que faisiez vous au temps chaud?
Dit-elle à cette emprunteuse,
Nuit et jour à tout venant
Je chantois—ne vous déplaît-il
Vous chanziez! J'en suis fort aise.
Hé bien! dansez maintenant.

Translation.

'A grasshopper the summer long,
Had chirped her song;
And found, at setting in of frost,
Her storehouse empty to her cost,
No worm, nor maggot-fly, nor mite,
To stay her gnawing appetite.
'Close to the ant, her neighbour's door,
She cried out "Famine!" From her store
Prayed her a little grain to lend
Till spring returned, and times should mend.
'The summer soon would shine upon her,
And then, she pledged her word of honour,
She'd not forget,
With interest, to repay the debt."
The ant, of lending rather shy,
Asked of the borrower the reason—
"What did you all the summer season?"
"I sang to every passer-by."
"Sang!" "Yes, you heard my songs perchance,
The live-long day
I sang away—"
"In-deed!! Now dance."

Some of the French commentators find fault with this fable, and contend, that it would not be so often quoted, if it were not the first in order. I do not subscribe to this opinion. The moral is excellent; it teaches industry, economy, and prudence.

The composition has La Fontaine's quaintness and peculiar playfulness: few of his Fables are more valued or better remembered.

In the Natural History of the Ant, given in 'The Guardian,' No. 156, the assertion, that 'the ant is not a lender,' is denied. 'They keep up a sort of trade among themselves; and it is not true, that these insects are not for lending. I know the contrary; they lend their corn,—they make exchanges,—they are always ready to serve one another; and, I can assure you, that time and patience would have enabled me to observe a thousand things more curious and wonderful than what I have mentioned.'

Hymn to Bolivar.—If ever a language was formed to celebrate the onset of battle, and the triumph of liberty, it is the Spanish. The very sound of its words conveys, as by magic, the neighing of horses, the clash of arms, and the martial beat of the drum. The elevation, strength, and dignity which distinguish it, eminently qualify it to sing the triumph of a nation rising above the efforts of oppression, and bestowing on its citizens their natural rights. All these qualities of elevated poetry are said to be found in a recent hymn to Bolivar, by M. J. J. Olmedo.

NOTICE.

[The Reader is requested to refer to the middle column of page 126 for the announcement of a second publication of *THE ATHENÆUM* during the week,—with the reasons for such a measure.]

PICTURES OF SOCIETY—DRAWN FROM LIFE
BY A NOBLEMAN.

No. V.

Kioff—the Catacombs—the Serf—Madame Davidoff's Story.

'Voyageur qui passe ici-bas dans une vallée de larmes, tu te reposerai au tombeau!'

A TRAGEDY lately represented at Covent Garden Theatre entitled 'The Serf', founded on a fact in Russian History, and in which Mr. Charles Kemble and Mr. Young gave proofs of that superior talent, which has placed them in the first rank of dramatic art in England, has called to my recollection an interesting anecdote, the heroine of which I knew well. As it presents a singular resemblance to the story on which the play is founded, I make it the subject of my present communication.

After arriving at Kioff† from Moscow, I remained a few days in the former city, before I had the opportunity of visiting the celebrated monastery of Petchersky, which gives its name to the upper division of the town.

Count Miloradowitch, ‡ the Governor-General of the province, received me with that hospitable politeness which so eminently distinguishes the Russian nation, and sent one of his secretaries to act as my guide in the excursion I intended to make. We left my inn, situated in the Podoli,§ which is washed by the Dnieper, (the ancient Borysthenes,) and began to climb the mountain which separates the two towns, while the rising sun darted his rays in streams of fire on the gilded cupolas of the church of the convent. We rested for a few moments beside a column, erected on the spot where St. Andrew, the Apostle, first planted the Cross, while sojourning on his way to preach the Gospel at Cherson (A. D. 52). To this pillar has been added a baptismal font, in which the children of the Grand Duke Wladimir were baptized, when their father embraced the Christian religion in 989.

After a tiresome walk of two hours, we reached the summit of the mountain, where, within a fortress, built by Peter I., is constructed the Convent of the Caverns—a name derived from the following circumstance. About the end of the eleventh century, when the passion for cenobism prevailed throughout all Europe, three hermits took up their residence in a cavern which previously formed a refuge for robbers, who had long infested the country. Other pious men soon joined them, and increased the number of subterranean cells. At last they formed a considerable community, of which one named Anthony was appointed the head. The cells served afterwards for the tombs of the founders; and a rich convent now rises above their modest but holy sepulchre. Preceded by

* The Serfs are the peasants belonging to the landed estates in Russia and Poland. They are also designated slaves or subjects. A ukase of the Emperor Alexander prohibited them from being partially sold. They constitute a part of the landed property.

† Called Kioff the great or the holy. It is supposed to have been founded in the year 430, by Prince Kio, after whom it was named. In the year 1027, Prince Wladimir made it the capital of the Russian empire.

‡ Count Miloradowitch was originally aide-de-camp to Souwaroff, whose entire confidence he enjoyed. He became one of the most distinguished generals of the Russian army, and was Commander-in-chief against the Turks in Walachia. He commanded the advanced guard in 1812, and received Murat when he was sent by Buonaparte to propose an adjustment. He afterwards became Governor-General of St. Petersburg, and in the year 1825, while exerting himself to quell an insurrection, he was shot by one of the ringleaders of the disturbance. His death was universally regretted.

§ The lower part of the city.

a monk, who carried a torch, we descended into these catacombs, where quietly repose the bodies of saints which time has respected. Their lifeless remains, which exhibit no marks of decay, are covered with rich robes, and deposited in the cells in which they formerly lived. In a detached cavern we were shown the body of Nestor, the venerable historian of Russia, who first separated historical facts from gross superstitions.* Notwithstanding the patient attention of the monk, who, on entering each cell, related all the circumstances which had obtained for its pious inhabitant the honours of canonization, we hastened to leave a place in which the mind was oppressed instead of experiencing that tender melancholy which is excited in cemeteries of the ordinary kind. Here we had the torments of the living amidst the horrors of the dead. Having, in another part of the tombs, drunk holy water out of an iron vessel in the form of a cross, which was presented to us by a monk, we were conducted to the treasury of the convent. I expected to have seen more wealth there, particularly when I recollected that a great number of pilgrims repair annually to this convent from every quarter of the Russian empire. However, with the exception of the ecclesiastical ornaments, which are embroidered with pearls, a few gold and silver vases, more valuable for weight than workmanship, some richly bound bibles, and the shrine and garments of Saint Barbara, I observed nothing that deserves to be mentioned.

On leaving the convent, after thanking my guide and bidding him farewell, I was accosted by Alexander Ypsylanti,† who was waiting to conduct me to his father. This young man with whom I had been very intimate at St. Petersburg, gave most favourable indications of his future disposition and character. To great courage he joined an amenity which endeared him to his friends, and he supported his change of fortune with equanimity and dignity.

The Hospodar received me with a politeness becoming the rank in which fate had heretofore placed him. He interested me not only by the circumstances of his political existence, but still more by the great extent of his information. His endeavours to promote the happiness of those he governed had not made him forget to improve his own fortune, which was estimated at several millions. On my expressing my surprise at his refusal of the titles and honours which Alexander

* Russia is indebted, for a general history of her obscure annals, to the talent and perseverance of M. Karamzin, who devoted a laborious life to the completion of the important work. He died in 1826.

† Alexander Ypsylanti, at the early age of sixteen, commanded a corps of 800 Arnauts. He escorted and saved his father when the Hospodar, having escaped from the Mutes of the Seraglio, crossed the Carpathian mountains to seek an asylum in Russia. The young prince, who was educated by the Emperor Alexander, entered the service of his benefactor as an Ensign of the Guards. By his own merit he attained the rank of General, and he lost an arm at the battle of Lutzen, where he fought valiantly at the head of his brigade. He was endowed with a generous soul and an enterprising spirit, and he had an immense fortune at his disposal. Conceiving that the period of his country's liberation was at hand, he determined to devote himself to the noble cause of the regeneration of Greece. An illustrious name, and a military reputation honourably acquired, fitted him for this glorious enterprise, and he departed accompanied by the good wishes of all Europe. Success would have made him a hero! But alas! he was doomed to expiate, in the dungeons of the fortress of Montgat, the irredeemable fault of having failed in an enterprise which success would have justified! In politics, misfortune constitutes crime. The Admirals who recently beat the Turkish fleet have been loaded with honours, while he who made a fruitless attempt to subdue them, was loaded with chains. A letter dated Vienna, Jan. 30th, states that the ill-fated Prince has sunk beneath the weight of his misfortunes. He expired in the arms of his brother-in-law, Prince Razamously, formerly Ambassador from Russia to the Court of Vienna.

had offered to confer on him, he replied, 'I have always been of opinion, that the man who has been stripped of his rank can only preserve his dignity by avoiding display, by making advances to no one, by yielding to no claims save those of friendship, and by living in a profound solitude. Acting on this rule of conduct, I have chosen Kioff for my residence, and here for these two years past I have practically felt the full truth of the Persian proverb, "If you would be happy, let your life be obscure."'

After some conversation he introduced me to the Princesses, and I found the idea I had formed of Grecian beauty realized in his lovely daughters. Their books, musical instruments and pencils taught me that here letters and the arts were employed to subdue the recollection of the past; and that if the cultivation of the first stage of life depends upon labour, the full improvement of the second is often due to misfortune. Princess Ypsylanti asked me whether I was going to the dinner which Count Miloradowitch was to give that day in honour of the Emperor's birth-day? I replied in the affirmative, and that I hoped to meet her there with her daughters. 'The reasons which I just now gave you for my own retirement,' observed Ypsylanti, 'apply equally to my family. The less a man shows himself in the world, the less is his risk of external wounds. But my son will accompany you. He is now a Russian, and he devotes himself ardently to the new career on which he has entered. He deprecates only the recollection of the past, and hope still cheers him with promises of a happier future.'

I took leave of their highnesses, and before dinner, accompanied by young Ypsylanti, we took a stroll through the town, which is interesting only at the period of holding a fair, called the *Contracts*, which lasts from the 10th to the 30th of January, and which occasions a vast circulation of money.

At five o'clock, we proceeded to the Governor General's. The Government palace is a fine residence, and at the period here referred to, it had been furnished in most elegant style by Count Miloradowitch. The gardens, which were beautifully laid out, were open as a promenade to the inhabitants of Kioff. The dinner presented a specimen of the Count's munificent taste, and there was profusion without confusion. I had the good fortune to be seated next to Madame Aglaé Davidoff, (before her marriage, Mademoiselle de Grammont,) and I thus escaped the dullness, which so frequently attends a dinner of ceremony. We conversed about her family, who were known to me, and the fate of her uncles, Counts Armand and Jules de Polignac, who then excited general interest. We soon became intimate. We were both young and far from our native country, and fond recollections, common to us both, supplied the place of previous acquaintance.

Opposite to us, on the right hand of the Governor, there sat a young lady, whose beauty attracted my notice. The paleness of her interesting countenance was heightened by the contrast of her luxuriant dark hair, which descended in clustering ringlets on her neck. Her long eyelashes modestly overshadowed eyes whose gaze no surrounding object had for a moment power to attract. Her abstracted and melancholy air seemed to be the effect of deep and protracted grief. Her appearance altogether powerfully excited my interest, and I could not refrain from asking my fair neighbour whether she knew her. 'I do,' replied Madame Davidoff. 'The estate belonging to my family in Prodolia, adjoins one of hers, and I have frequently passed whole months at her father's residence. An event equally interesting and unfortunate, in one moment, blighted the happiness of her whole life.'—'Dare I venture to ask what it was?' I inquired; 'for I assure you my curiosity is powerfully excited.'—'The sad story is no secret,' answered the lady; 'but it is too long to be told now; and besides, the unhappy subject

of it would feel uneasy, if she thought we were talking about her. However, in the course of the evening, I shall, I dare say, find an opportunity of satisfying you.' Here our conversation was interrupted by the noisy and barbarous music of a Calmuck regiment. This was followed by a band of horns, the melancholy harmony of which can perhaps only be heard in perfection in Russia. At length the dinner being concluded, and the usual toasts drunk to the accompaniment of loud cheers and discharges of artillery from the garrison, the company retired to an apartment splendidly illuminated with wax lights. Count Miloradowitch opened the ball by a polonaise with Princess Helen Suwaroff, daughter of the Grand Chamberlain Narischkin. During the intervals between the dances, M. M. Lafont and Romberg exhibited their masterly talent on the violin and violoncello. The heat of the rooms was excessive, and I drew near to Madame Davidoff to remind her of her promise. She took my arm, and we descended to the terrace, and seated ourselves in a pavilion overlooking the extensive plain surrounding the town, which is washed by the waves of the winding Borysthènes. Here my fair companion commenced her story as follows:

'You have doubtless heard of Count Bro—ky, who was as celebrated for his brilliant eloquence as for his vast fortune. His only daughter, Vanda, having lost her mother at her birth, the Count hired as her nurse the wife of one of his Ukrainian subjects, a soldier who, a few months before, had departed with his regiment for the Caucasus. The woman, with her infant son, was transferred from their humble abode to the castle of Count Bro—ky, and Vanda and her foster-brother Iwan were consequently brought up together. The boy, as he grew up, developed the germs of those noble qualities which nature had implanted in him; and the Count, becoming more and more attached to him, sent him to complete his education at the University of Wilna, which Prince Ozortorinsky had at that time raised to a level with the most celebrated learned institutions in Europe. There he remained three years, and on his return, being scarcely twenty years of age, the Count made him his steward, and gave him the complete management of all his estates. In this situation he acquitted himself so honourably, that while he diminished the labour and the burthens of the peasantry, he increased considerably the revenues of his patron.

'I have already told you that I frequently made a visit of several weeks at the castle of Count Bro—ky. The origin of my acquaintance with the family was as follows: My grandfather, the Duke de Polignac, was on a footing of intimacy with Count Bro—ky, when the latter came to France before the Revolution. The high favour which the Duke and all his family enjoyed at court, afforded him the means of rendering a foreigner's visit to Paris exceedingly agreeable; and during the misfortunes of our emigration, Count Bro—ky, by his kindness, amply repaid any favours he might at a former period have received from my grandfather. But, alas! the consolations of generous hospitality cannot banish the recollections of one's country and one's home! However, my aunt, the Countess Diana, who was exceedingly fond of me, often took me with her on a visit to the castle of Count Bro—ky, where I had the opportunity of receiving instructions from the various masters who were engaged for the education of the young Countess. Vanda's cousin, a charming girl named Elizabeth P—ka, was also the companion of our studies. When left an orphan, at the age of five, she became the Count's ward, who not only educated her carefully, but managed all her large estates, most of which were situated in Cherson, of which her father had been governor. Though Vanda and her young kinswoman differed essentially in character, yet, as both were equally kindly disposed and amiable, that difference did not diminish their friendship. Vanda was lively, and sometimes impetuous; but

her excellent heart so quickly overflowed with regret for the commission of a fault, that it was impossible to withhold her pardon for a moment. Elizabeth, on the contrary, who was less handsome than her cousin, was very reserved. By her air of abstraction and melancholy, she seemed to be made to love and to suffer without complaining. Often in our juvenile sports did we try to provoke her to depart from that uniform gentleness and patience which seemed her second nature, but without success; for, calm and resigned, she always met our tricks with her usual sweetness of temper, and frequently made us blush for having attempted them. We had all three finished our education when Iwan returned from Wilna. He had lost his mother several years before, and as we had not for a long time heard of his father, we concluded that he had died fighting against the Circassians. The castle of Count Bro—ky now became Iwan's only home; and there he found the want of parents supplied by the kind hearts of his benefactors. It seemed that the same destiny which made his birth obscure, had, as a compensation, endowed him with uncommon personal beauty, and qualities which endeared him to all who were capable of appreciating him. It may easily be supposed that the praises of this young man, frequently and publicly pronounced by the Count, made a powerful impression on the minds and hearts of the two charming cousins, who lived under the same roof with him without constraint, and had been accustomed from infancy to regard him as a brother, and to treat him as an equal. They were still ignorant of what love meant, while both felt the passion in its full force. When they began to understand the nature of their feelings, and ventured to fathom their hearts, Vanda consoled herself by cherishing the idea that her father's blind fondness for herself, and the affection he had always manifested for Iwan, would smooth the distance which seemed otherwise calculated to separate them for ever. In that happy age in which our belief readily accommodates itself to our wishes, to imagine that she was beloved by Iwan sufficed to make her overlook all idea of danger from such a passion. With respect to Elizabeth, mistress of herself and of her large property, the idea of indemnifying Iwan for the wrongs of fortune, seemed to her the foundation of the feeling she entertained towards him, and she only waited for a favourable opportunity to ask of her uncle that consent which she had no doubt of obtaining.

'Iwan did not long remain ignorant of the sentiments which he had inspired; but, though passionately enamoured of Vanda, respect and honour forbade him to reveal his love; and, to avoid suspicion, he paid more attention to Elizabeth than to her, whom he adored in silence. Meanwhile, if Elizabeth supposed herself the object of Iwan's regard, Vanda was certain that she was beloved; for a woman is seldom long deceived as to the sentiments she raises in the other sex. One day, when I was on a visit, with all my family, at the Castle, the Count said to me, "Aglée, have not you a sister married in England?"—"Yes," I replied, "to Lord Tankerville, whose estates are in Northumberland, but who resides constantly in London."—"In that case," rejoined the Count, "you will oblige me by giving Iwan a letter to Lady Tankerville. I wish him to make a journey to England, and to remain there some months. He will visit the manufacturing towns, to collect information respecting improvements in agriculture, and to bring back with him much general knowledge, which may be easily turned to the advantage of this country. To-morrow, I intend to go with him to Maknomska, where I have manufactories of leather and cloth, and some German workmen. But men capable of superintending the works are wanting, and I have no doubt that Iwan will be able to bring skilful persons from England, who will soon give life to a branch of

trade which is paralyzed solely for want of a system."

'I assured him that I would with pleasure do what he desired, and my family immediately concurred with me in making joint offers of our services. "I shall be absent about a week," continued the Count; "but will return for Vanda's birthday. You will, no doubt, as usual, favour us with your company, and, in the mean time, you can prepare your letter. I expect soon to have an opportunity for Dantzic, and from thence Iwan will proceed immediately to England." He accordingly set out next day for his manufacturing settlement above alluded to, which was situated in Wolhinia.

'In the following week we returned to the Castle, where every preparation had been made for a fête, for the twofold celebration of Vanda's birthday, and the return of the Count and Iwan, who were expected that evening. A small but select party of friends were already assembled, and all were eagerly watching at the windows for the approach of the travellers. About seven o'clock in the evening, we descried them, followed by a few servants, advancing towards the Castle as rapidly as their Ukrainian steeds could carry them.

'You have doubtless observed, that almost all the villages in Poland are built on the slope of a mountain, the base of which is washed by a lake, and that a narrow road, raised in the form of a dyke, confines the water, which serves to turn a mill. These roads are almost all public thoroughfares; and along one of them the Count was proceeding at full gallop when we first discerned him in the distance. A herd of oxen was advancing from the opposite extremity of the road; and one of the animals taking fright at the velocity with which the travellers darted along, suddenly thrust his horns into the side of the Count's horse. The noble animal starting back, fell into the lake, dragging his rider with him. To leap from his saddle, and to plunge into the water for the rescue of his benefactor, was to Iwan only the affair of a moment. But his task was difficult. The Count, having one foot entangled in his stirrup, was dragged along by his horse, which, in spite of his loss of blood, swam so rapidly that Iwan, who was encumbered with his clothes, could not easily overtake him. However, by dint of vigorous efforts, he at length reached him. The Count's foot was disengaged from the stirrup, and Iwan kept his head above water until a boat, which had been sent to their aid, received them both, and conveyed them ashore.

'I leave you to imagine the consternation which at this moment prevailed in the Castle. Shrieks of terror resounded on every side, and tears streamed from every eye. Vanda fainted in the arms of her cousin; and these two interesting beings were carried to their chambers in an almost lifeless state. The unhappy Vanda recovered from her swoon only to learn the full extent of her misfortune. The doctor, who had bled the Count twice, entertained but faint hopes of saving him. Every remedy was applied without effect, and the current of life was rapidly ebbing. As soon as this fatal sentence was pronounced, the assembled guests hastened to quit the house of mourning, conscious that their presence would only be an intrusion on sorrow which they could not alleviate.

'Conceiving that the situation of my unhappy young friends demanded all my sympathy and attention, I prevailed on my family to allow me to remain with them. In a few hours, Iwan, being somewhat recovered from the exhaustion caused by his heroic exertions, came to mingle his tears with ours, and to deplore the sad event which deprived him of more than a parent. Alas! how were our feelings at variance with the objects that intruded themselves on our gaze. On every side we beheld garlands of flowers, blazing chandeliers, and spread tables; while an adored father, lunge, and benefactor, was expiring in the arms

of his despairing family. The servants were weeping bitterly, and the sobs and lamentations of the peasantry who thronged the court-yard, were re-echoed in our hearts. The melancholy picture still is, and will ever remain, vividly present in my imagination.

'About midnight, the Count, for a few moments, became sensible, but his strength was reduced to the last extremity. Gazing wildly round him, he uttered the names of Vanda, Elizabeth, and Iwan; but the words died on his lips. A few drops of a potion were administered to him, and he appeared somewhat revived. With difficulty he was raised in his bed; and taking Iwan by the hand, he said, pointing to the two young orphans, "My son, I confide them to your protection." He then pronounced his blessing on all three, as they knelt by his bed-side; and joining the hands of Vanda and Iwan, he added, "My dear son, let her happiness be your care." These were his last words, and at three in the morning he expired.

Vanda now became the object of our concern, and for some time we entertained serious apprehensions for her life. She was with difficulty torn from the remains of her father, and together with her cousin, removed from the scene of death. I followed them, in the hope of assuaging their grief; but it is vain to offer consolation when despair triumphs over reason. Iwan, manfully struggling with his feelings, punctually discharged all the duties which devolved upon him at that sad moment. He actively superintended the affairs of the Castle, and made every preparation for rendering the last honours to the revered remains of his benefactor. The same friends who but a week before had joyfully assembled to celebrate the birth-day of the daughter, now met in sable array to follow the father to the grave, and—

"All things that were ordained festival,
Turn'd from their office to black funeral."

'The mournful procession was followed by the whole population of the Count's vast estates, and every individual bore in his countenance visible marks of the grief which wrung his heart. All seemed to deplore the loss of a father.

'For the space of a year after the Count's death, the two cousins declined receiving any visitors, except myself. Vanda, who, by the dying words of her father, considered herself as betrothed to Iwan, no longer disguised her attachment for him. Elizabeth, having renounced all hope of a union with the object of her affections, suffered in silence the miseries of disappointed love, while she wished to have it supposed that her uncle's death was the sole cause of her deep and continued sorrow. Iwan, however, who well knew its real cause, and who could only offer the affection of a brother in return for her devoted attachment, endeavoured by proofs of the warmest friendship to console her for the love which it was not in his power to bestow.

'Suddenly the cloud of melancholy which had so long overshadowed the countenance of Elizabeth disappeared, and she assumed a serenity to which she had long been a stranger. Instead of avoiding Iwan as heretofore, she eagerly sought his society, and became as familiar with him as they had been in the days of their childhood. Even in the presence of Vanda, she would gaze on him with a look of affection, which seemed to say, "I shall yet be happy!" This unexpected change excited surprise in all who observed it, and soon gave birth to a feeling of jealousy in the heart of Vanda. Too proud to complain, she cautiously concealed her suspicions from all save a female attendant, whom she instructed to watch the conduct of Iwan and her cousin. She was soon informed that they had secretly met in an arbour in the garden at day-break, before any of the inmates of the Castle had risen; and to this disclosure was added, the mention of various circumstances calculated to wound the heart of an affectionate woman. She was told that Iwan had been seen on his knees apparently imploring the forgiveness

of Elizabeth, and that when he arose they fondly embraced other. Distressed beyond imagination at finding herself thus cruelly deceived by the two beings whom she loved most dearly in the world, she anxiously prayed for a favourable opportunity of punishing their ingratitude and treachery. Alas! this opportunity occurred but too soon!

'For some days past Elizabeth's servants had been observed busily preparing their mistress's travelling carriage, and relays were ordered to be in readiness at certain places. These were the only circumstances which warranted a suspicion of her intention to quit the Castle. She herself had intimated no such design to any one, until, suddenly seizing the hand of Vanda, she said, with tears in her eyes, "Dearest cousin, I must leave you to-morrow, but I hope only for a short while, though I cannot, at present, name the day of my return." My mother's sister, who, along with you, forms my whole family, is, I am informed, dangerously ill, and desires anxiously to see me, perhaps, for the last time. I must, of course, hasten to fulfil so sacred a duty, and I shall accordingly set out to-morrow at day-break. I mean to take only my maid with me; but, in my absence, Iwan will take charge of the rest of my servants who remain behind. Do not forget your Elizabeth, who, be assured, will love you affectionately till her latest breath." With these last words, she threw her arms round Vanda's neck, and strained her to her bosom. Such emotion, on account of a very short absence, was far from appearing natural, and it excited the strongest suspicions in the mind of Vanda. She supposed that Elizabeth and Iwan had concerted their flight together, and that the story of the journey was only a pretext to enable them to carry their scheme the more easily into effect. The coldness with which Vanda received this tender farewell was not observed by Elizabeth, whose excessive grief seemed to subdue all her faculties.

'As soon as Vanda returned to her own apartments she ordered Sarah, her favourite maid, to be immediately called. "It is but too true," said she, "the ungrateful wretches are flying from me, and repaying the benefits of my father and myself, by breaking a heart whose only fault was its mistaken reliance on their virtues.—Run—lose not a moment—trace their footsteps—watch their movements; and come back immediately and tell me every thing you discover. They are not yet so certain of success as they imagine." Sarah obeyed her mistress without delay; and Vanda, overpowered with grief, threw herself on a sofa in her chamber. There, calling to recollection all the marks of love which Iwan had given her, all the proofs of affection and attachment which, ever since their infancy, her cousin had lavished upon her, she strove to repel the cruel idea that she was deceived by two beings so dear to her. But her confidante returned; and, with her, all the torments of jealousy revived. "Well, have you seen them together?"—"Yes," replied the maid, "I have just left them."—"Where?"—"In the very same part of the garden where I have already told you they meet every morning."—"Ah! what did you overhear?"—"I have no doubt they had been there some time before I got sight of them. Iwan was kneeling before Elizabeth; he held in his hand a paper, which it appeared she had just given him, and which he was urging her to take back. "Nothing can make me change my resolution," said Elizabeth; "it is unalterable. Be prudent; I have your promise, and on that I rely. In three days we shall have nothing to conceal." "Three days!" said Vanda, with a sigh. "At the altar," continued Elizabeth, "I will release you from this oath, especially if every thing is kept from Vanda's knowledge." Iwan, still on his knees, begged her to defer her departure but for one day. "My dear Iwan," said she, "to-morrow at day-break we shall both of us have done our duty!" Here their tears flowed in abundance. At last both left the arbour, and Iwan, placing the paper in his bosom, said: "It

shall remain here, dear Elizabeth, along with your secret, and the vow of adoration which I have made to you. Here they remain conjoined for life." "Farewell, Iwan," said she, "to-morrow Elizabeth will give you all that she can now dispose of." They then parted, and I hurried back to you, for it now wants but a few hours to day-break."

'Certain of being sacrificed to a rival, disdain for a moment took place of indignation in the mind of Vanda; but resolved to confound the two deceivers, she threw herself, dressed as she was, upon her bed, in order to be in readiness to leave her chamber at the first dawn of day. But exhausted as she was by grief, sleep soon overcame her, and after several troubled dreams, she awoke only in time to hear the tinkling of the bell which was attached to Elizabeth's travelling carriage.*

(To be concluded next week.)

THE BRITISH INSTITUTION, PALL MALL.

Principles of Criticism—Tone of the Modern School of Painting.

To all the Criminal Courts of Law in France, is attached an officer, with the title of *MINISTRE PUBLIC*, whose duty it is, in the interests of public justice, to watch the progress of every cause, to address the tribunal with impartiality on every charge which comes before it, to indicate the articles of the code applicable to each particular case, to state his opinion on the facts and on the law, and having so done, to leave the decision and the sentence to the wisdom of the judges. In a similar capacity would we desire to exercise our office of critic before the tribunal of the public. We pretend not as judges to pass sentence; nor would we plead as advocates retained by motives of interest, private predilection, or nationality, for or against a particular system, work, or artist. With the public interest only in view, we consider it our duty to apply to the works which come under our notice, the acknowledged principles of the art to which they respectively belong; to point out where they appear to us to obey or transgress the articles of the code to which they are amenable; and to submit our impressions to our readers, whose province it is to pronounce the sentence of praise or censure. Several and powerful reasons induce us to desire that our observations on works of art more especially, and on the efforts of the pencil above all others, may be received in this light. The situation in which the professors of painting are too generally placed as candidates, not only for public applause, but for employment; and the consideration of the vital injury, which may be done to a man to whom the exercise of his art is the only means of subsistence, by an unjust prejudice raised against him, are very strong arguments for leniency of judgment, for tardiness in prosecuting, and for wishing to avoid the responsibility of condemnation. Another very powerful reason for reluctance to pass final sentence on a work of art in the present day, is the uncertainty and variance, which never fail to exist in the opinions given of every performance by persons who have natural and equal claims to be considered as competent judges. The reproach of proverbial and glorious uncertainty is not more truly deserved by the law, than by criticism on works of art, as we have had striking proofs in the few visits we have paid to the British Institution since its opening;—proofs which have led us into the remarks we are now making. It has been our chance to meet, in the rooms of the gallery, many persons, whose experience or practice necessarily entitles their opinions to consideration and respect, and the impossibility of reconciling the judgments pronounced by them is such as would deter the most forward from ever after expressing a confident opinion. The *Amphitrite* of Mr. Hilton is, we know, regarded by many judicious persons, as, on the whole, the best production in the present exhibition; it was not without astonishment, therefore, that, in viewing that picture, in company with an artist of no inconsiderable celebrity in a particular line, we heard his exclamation, "What a situation for such a thing!" When opposite the same picture, another gentleman, to whose judgment certain 'magnates of the land,' are said to defer

* In Russia it is usual to fasten bells to travelling carriages; and the ringing being heard at a distance in the solitary roads, warns the peasantry to range their carts and sledges on one side, so as not to obstruct the way.

somewhat more than the general opinion thinks his taste deserves, was excited to ecstasy by the painting of Mr. Briggs, enlarged warmly on its merits to the posse which surrounded him, passed the *Amphitrite* with bare notice; while an artist of eminence among the group expressed aside his surprise at the want of discrimination of the practised connoisseur.

Besides the differences of opinion on the merits of particular performances, there exists one of still more importance on the general style of colouring. The objection mentioned in a former Number of *THE ATHENÆUM* as having been made to a picture distinguished by its depth of tone from those by which it was surrounded, that it was not English, was made by an artist, but without sufficient indication of his own sentiments to enable us to conclude whether he intended to condemn the style of the colouring, or the taste of the British school. With still greater astonishment, we overheard a gentleman, who has spent all his life in procuring and disposing of the deep-toned works of ancient masters, and whom we know to have now in his possession a choice collection of them, objecting to the few performances in the British Gallery which have at all followed, or attempted to follow, the approved practice of those masters, and the recommendations of the great English preceptor in giving depth of tone to their colouring, that they were *dirty*. It is to this point that we wish more particularly to direct our observations, both because we think the British school is pursuing a wrong course, and because, as our remarks apply to a fault, if it be one, which is general, we have not to fear committing individual injury. To a person who has been in the habit of contemplating the Continental galleries, the walls of which are hung with the works of those who are universally considered as masters of their art, the general effect of a British exhibition without reference to individual performances, is truly chilling and revolting. It reminds him, to use the expression of an ingenious friend, of his passage across the snow-clad Alps, from the warm and sunny plains of Italy. Nor is it familiarity with continental collections necessary to our sensibility to this unpleasant effect; it is enough to know the contents of one or two galleries in our own metropolis; to have made no longer a journey than from the opposite side of Pall-Mall to experience a similar sensation from the raw, cold, and leaden colouring which predominates in the English school. Less excuse can be made for this too general fault of rawness and want of tone in our modern colouring, because it is persisted in contrary to the evidence thus afforded to the senses, and in the teeth of the lectures of the Great Master, whom the dignitaries of a certain society never cease to quote and to laud, and with whose works they reward their successful élèves—while by their practice they uphold doctrines so contrary to those inculcated by him, as to encourage a general distaste for depth of tone on which he so much insists. The effect of this encouragement, and the bias which it gives to public taste, is visible in the evident prejudice which exists against the works of those artists who have graduated in foreign schools, those of Italy more especially, and who return to their own country imbued with admiration of the depth of tone, surface, and *chiara scuro* of the ancient masters. Their endeavours to attain those qualities are viewed with indifference and neglect by the side of the freshness and vivacity, as they are called, of red-lead, cobalt, chrome, and verdigrise, which, under the appellation of pure nature, are put forth to claim the exclusive favour of the public, ceding only pure white itself, which truly seems enthroned as the *Cleopatra* of modern practice, in spite of the oft repeated warning,

'The hand that colours well must colour bright,
Hope not that praise to gain by sickly white.'

It is, as we are well aware, asserted, that all finely coloured pictures were left in this crude state originally, that Titian's works, when fresh from the easel, were like ours: and ergo, it is maintained, ours in process of time, will be like Titian's! This is an absurdity which it seems incredible that any practical artist can believe. Time may mellow the tone of a picture, but it can no more impart that quality, than it can give the granulated surface by which all finely coloured pictures are distinguished. If practical proof of this be wanting, we have it in abundance in several foreign galleries, (that of Borghese at Rome for example) where may be seen pictures painted by contemporaries of Titian, to which time has forgotten to apply this cheap and easy finish; and which stare out in all the chilling crudity of their original whiteness. Nor is the assertion letter founded, that pictures wrought by the artist to a full effect of depth and harmony, become subsequently dark and heavy. It may be safely promised that the

only operation of time on such pictures, if they have been skilfully executed, will be, to give them additional clearness and brilliancy. As a proof of this, we have only to look at the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Wilson, not farther off from the British Institution than the National Gallery: another instance we had ourselves occasion to notice, some months since on remarking the effect of the position of the Mrs. Siddons of Sir Joshua, in the Grosvenor Gallery, where it triumphantly stands the test of the immediate vicinity of Titian and Claude, to the complete refutation of those who object to adherence to the principles imbibed from foreign schools.

In support of the system which we would uphold, it may be further observed, that it is sanctioned by the usage of the ancients, not less than by the lessons of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the practice of the most celebrated schools of the modern world. Sir Joshua, as he himself assures us, formed a high opinion of the pictorial skill of the ancients, from the fact conveyed by the passage of Pliny, which describes the mode of operation used by Apelles 'that, over his finished picture, he spread a transparent liquid, like ink, of which the effect was to give brilliancy, and, at the same time to lower the too great glare of the colour.' This sentence, Sir Joshua designates as a true and artist-like description of the effect of glazing, such as was practised by Titian and the rest of the Venetian Painters, and as a custom implying a true taste of that in which the excellence of colouring consists. The difference between such a mode and the modern usage may be exemplified by the works of some of the most admired artists who figure in the present exhibition; and which, excellent in many other respects, are wholly deficient in tone. We may instance the work of Mr. Briggs and Mrs. W. Carpenter; the *Psittax* more especially.

This evil has been one of the bad results of public exhibitions. Sir Joshua Reynolds perceived it, and taught in vain that fine colouring consists not in crude and raw colours, but in colours subdued to a deep-toned brightness. But the advocates for white had begun, even in that great artist's own time, to pronounce his works 'snuffy.' Wilson was assailed by the same senseless criticism, but had spirit enough to despise it. Opie listened to it, and his style and excellence vanished. Hence all the tone and richness in his early pictures—the chalk and insipidity of his latter works. The same evil has been prolonged to our day. The adoption of white as a key in colour has maintained itself, and threatens to end in the ruin of the school. A few there are who make efforts by following better methods, and the examples of the masters whose excellence, however denied in practice, is ever acknowledged in words, to stem the stream, in spite of the current of general opinion which, prepossessed, sets strongly against them. Some instances of these endeavours are shown in the present Exhibition of the British gallery, and to these we purpose particularly to call the attention of our readers in a subsequent Number.

THE DRAMA.

King's Theatre.—Saturday.

In recording the performances at this theatre during the past week, we cannot refrain from adverting to the curious coincidence in the representation, within that short period, of two Operas composed in the South of Europe upon the 'History of England,' almost a *Terra Incognita* to the Land of Melody. We rejoice at the circumstance, as presenting an additional token of the reciprocal cordiality existing at present between our own Country and the Continent, and which must eventually tend to the advantage of both. How far the Romance of our History has been followed is not of much importance. We hail both their titles—namely, *Margherita d'Anjou* and *La Rosa Bianca* e *la Rosa rossa* as a compliment to the English Nation, and shall not pause to question Margaret's widowhood or Gloucester's captivity during the northern campaign, which constitutes the ground work on which the former Opera has been sketched.

The story of *La Rosa Bianca* e *la Rosa rossa* is so short on the Italian Stage, that it is easily detailed; we leave our readers to reconcile the plot with dates and history.

Towards the close of the fourteenth century, the dominions of Richard having been torn by the feuds of Nobles warring under the Ensigns of the Red and White Rose, that Monarch espoused the Cause of the latter, and condemned the crimsoned partisans to banishment. To give additional force to this measure, he directed *Rodolph*, Lord Mortimer, to bestow the hand of his daughter *Clotilda*, upon *Vanoldo*, Earl of Seymour, who appears to have considered 'existing circumstances'

a sufficient excuse for joining the fair and bright side of the question. The Lady has, however, unfortunately, plighted her faith to *Henry*, Lord Derby, one of the proscribed *Rosarians*, who, suspecting his love's fidelity, determines at the risk of his life to convince himself of the actual state of her affections. He happens to arrive on the eve of her marriage, and unconscious of the treachery of his former friend, discovers himself to *Vanoldo*. *Henry* soon after meets *Clotilda* at a rural fete, of the purport of which he is yet ignorant, and privately discloses his presence by tendering her the proscribed flower. He finds her sufficiently firm in her attachment to consent in the presence of *Vanoldo*, to elope with him, his rival and the lady preserving a discreet silence as to the proximity of their more favoured engagement. *Henry* learns however the purport of the fete, and mingles with the guests. Still he is ignorant of the name of his rival, and in a moment of enthusiasm drinks 'perdition to the white rose,' in consequence of which he is thrown by the opposite faction into a dungeon, there to await the Royal sign manual for his execution. *Vanoldo* is seized with remorse, and with kinder feelings towards his early associate, and in order to save *Henry's* life and preserve *Clotilda* for himself, visits the prisoner and persuades him to accept his cloak, hat, &c. in order to elude the sentinels. Mutual compliments ensue, the one wishes to escape but shrinks at the apprehension of leaving his friend to certain destruction. *Henry* at last accepts the proffered disguise, and learns from *Vanoldo* before his departure, the fact of the latter having hitherto been his rival. There is little time for explanation, and he has scarcely quitted the castle when *Clotilda* returns with his pardon, which she has won from the King while hunting in the neighbourhood. Her disappointment may be imagined on discovering the exchange of prisoners; fortunately, however, at that moment his Lordship of Derby is brought back, his mind made up to imprisonment and the block, instead of, as it proves, liberty and the altar.

The above is a sketch of the literary portion of the opera 'La Rosa Bianca,' composed by S. Mayer, and performed for the first time in this country on Saturday last, to the fullest and most fashionable house we have beheld this season. On the present occasion we labour under some disadvantage in giving a detailed account of the music; for, added to the general impossibility of forming a correct opinion upon a first representation, we must urge the serious and lamented indisposition of Madame Caradori, which, notwithstanding the greatest efforts on her part to surmount it, rendered it necessary to omit several airs in the first act, and even entire scenes in the second. The music is, however, perfectly intelligible, and, we may add, pleasing. To prejudiced *Rosinists*, the absence of all *brío* will no doubt make it appear insipid. But, in our opinion, it is a perfect *rosary* of neat melodies, occasionally, perhaps, common-place, but well turned and rhythmical throughout. *La Rosa bianca* will no doubt afford materials for some dozen sets of quadrilles, and the chorus at the banquet in the first act is as complete a waltz as the Spanish 'Tragala,' which it in some measure resembles.

The overture deserves no especial mention; it is weak in many parts, and is strung together much in the style of the impromptu overtures at our National Theatres, adapted to all pieces, from pantomime to melodrama. The opening movement is curious; and, if we mistake not, repeated in the funeral march in the second act. In this piece, as throughout the Opera, the stringed instruments have, à la Mozart, the principal share. The accompaniments are beautiful, and often original. *Vanoldo's* opening cavatina, 'Co' suoi frequenti palpiti,' is a jewel in this respect. Indeed the manner in which the orchestra performed their part deserves the highest commendation; and it may be fully appreciated, as the brass and parchment at the right hand extremity have almost a sincere. However, the accompaniments may remind us of Mozart, the Opera itself has many portions of the Rosini School. On the whole, however, its style is more like the earlier Italian author, Martini, the composer of the 'Arbore di Diana,' 'La Cosa rosa,' &c. It is evidently the production of an elderly gentleman, who prefers tranquillity to the noisy bustle of the world; and, however, unartist-like the term, we know no word by which it can be more faithfully described than—pretty!

Madame Pasta's *Enrico* was above all praise: this part adds another gem to her histrionic crown. She looked, even in the garb of the other sex, beautiful; indeed, we daily get more reconciled to her change of habit in this respect, and look forward with pleasure to her assumption of Velluti's part in the 'Crocato.' Her pathetic execution of the first recitative and air, 'Laura patia,' exquisitely interspersed by Mr.

Spagnoletti's solos, yields only to the magnificent display of science in the various movements allotted to her by the composer in the prison scene. The presto, 'Si crudo è il mio destino,' and the style in which the lines,

'Io sento che lei regna,
Scalpita nel mio cor'

were given, drew forth a simultaneous and enthusiastic encore. This lady's duet with Curioni, 'In tal momento,' also deserves notice; the lively pastorella of the first portion being finely relieved by some clever counter passages in the second stanza.

Of Madame Caradori, as *Clotilda*, it would be injustice to speak. A bill distributed through the house prepared us, in some measure, for the disappointment; but, when we became aware of the importance and length of the part allotted to her, we almost wished the Managers had substituted another opera. They were no doubt influenced by a desire to avoid the reproach of delay; and Madame Caradori appeared in a state evidently unfit to leave her chamber. With the utmost devotion to her professional duties, and that amiableness of disposition for which this lady is so justly a universal favourite, she made every effort to proceed in her opening air, but ineffectually; and it required the interval of a subsequent chorus to restore, in some degree, her strength. Her struggle against exhausted nature ultimately succeeded, however, and she proceeded through the first act in a manner wholly unexpected, executing the arietta 'La dolce imagine,' in a style as gratifying as it was surprising to her numerous friends and admirers. We fear the exertion proved too much; all her scenes in the second act were omitted, and at the close we had to regret, for her own sake, that she had not earlier retired, instead of remaining in the Theatre to support the finale.

Curioni's *Vanoldo* was effective, true and well studied. There is, however, such a lack-a-daisical expression pervading the style of his performance, that it almost unfits him for the dark character he has to sustain in this opera. Of his cavatina on entering, and his duet with Madame Pasta, we have already spoken; the subsequent portion of the former, interspersed by the chorus, deserves equal commendation. The duet with Eurico in the prison appeared to us to be not perfectly understood by the parties; a second representation may, perhaps, alter that opinion.

However indispensable the voice of Porto, who personated *Rodolph Lord Mortimer*, may be in the tutti portions of an opera, we are free to confess that it has not a pleasing effect in solos. In the present opera two bass airs are allotted to him; that in the first act might have been omitted altogether; the other 'La figlia, la figlia,' at a later period of the drama, produced a better effect, and reminded us strongly of Rossini. This gentleman's acting was extremely equivocal; the contortions of his features, on learning the pardon of Henry, would have left a physiognomist in doubt whether the internal workings were mental or corporeal, until the exclamation—

'Si già cede il genitore,
Dono a voi felicità,'

relieved the spectator from all anxiety as to bodily indisposition.

Elvira, the widowed Countess of Norton, a character filled by Madame Castelli, has a great deal to say in recitative, but for what purpose so much is introduced into the 'Libretto,' except to fill up the finales, we are at a loss to imagine. The same remark may be applied to Lord Derby's *Squire Ubaldo*, although the importance attached by Signor Deville to the character may be different from our own ideas on the subject.

The opera is extraordinarily bare in concerted pieces; the trio in the first act 'Dov'è la destra infida,' between Mesdames Pasta and Caradori and Signor Curioni, being, exclusive of the finales, the only one in the whole piece. It is, however, delicious; and by far the finest morceau of the opera. Even the sextet in the finale of the first act was well executed, and with simultaneous precision, an observation that applies more or less to every portion of the opera, vocal and instrumental. The diligence and accuracy with which it has been studied and rehearsed, reflect great credit on the establishment.

Considerable expense has been incurred in the production of 'La Rosa bianca e la Rosa rossa.' A few new scenes were displayed, one of which, however unfit for the purpose, was well executed. We allude to 'a large hall in a state prison.' What the bounds of Lord Mortimer's strong hold were, we know not; but my Lord Derby appeared on Saturday to have the full benefit of the Rules, as a more insecure place of

confinement than the one represented, we should be at loss to imagine.

Of the costume, Madame Caradori's first dress was chaste and correct—Madame Pasta's, elegant and becoming. With the other characters there was at least variety, Madame Castelli being *en Marie Stuart*, and Porto in a Spanish hose and doublet. The choristers would also have been improved by a few slight alterations in their outward man; but they sang in time and in tune, and therefore appeared to us, all *couteur de rose*.

We have seen nothing new this week in the ballet department. A new divertissement is announced, in which Mademoiselle Albert will appear.

English Opera House, Wednesday.

This evening the French Company represented at that Theatre a new Vaudeville in three acts, called 'La Sonnambule Villageoise,' which obtained much applause. The dialogue and the songs are rather mediocre, but the action is exceedingly dramatic, and the interest continually increases towards the end. Messrs. Perlet and Daudel, and Mies. Lemery and Boquet, contributed greatly, by the excellence of their acting, to the success of the piece.

Friday.

Molière's 'Bourgeois-gentilhomme' was performed this evening. The character of *Dorimene* was rather above the power of Mademoiselle Boquet. M. Laurent, whom we afterwards saw with pleasure, in the 'Aubergiste Bourguemestre,' was but feeble in the part of *Le Maître de Philosophie*; Madame Laspiu rather vociferated than spoke her part. Perlet represented exceedingly well the ridiculous foppery of *Le Bourgeois-gentilhomme*; and Madame Daudel the vulgar frankness of the servant *Nicole*; Pelissié played the short part of *Maître d'Armes*, in the true spirit of a bravo.

Drury-Lane, Thursday.

It is now some seasons since 'Der Freyschütz' was introduced to our English stage by Mr. Hawes—since Mr. Arnold of the English Opera House dared what the two great national Theatres feared to produce; although their respective managers previously knew the successes resulting from its representation throughout Germany for two years; and, we believe, had actually seen the score. One, we know, had; and also had shown it to a popular vocalist and composer; who pronounced 'that it could not succeed here.' If this opinion were disinterested, it could scarcely be founded upon a want of knowledge in his profession as a singer, because he is a consummate practical musician: but as a composer, concluding from what he has written, his highest fame is but vulgar popularity: unmerited we would say, if, like himself, perhaps, we weighed the sterling worth of his notes by what they have realized to him in sterling gold: but, as this is not our mode of estimating genius and art, we will call it *well merited*. We believe this gentleman has the discrimination to despise the purchasers and the applauders of the stuff he writes and sings: we further believe, that none more highly esteem the genius and talent developed in 'Der Freyschütz' than himself. May not we then, upon the supposition of his *disinterestedness*, attribute his premature decision to an utter contempt of our musical taste as a people?—conscious that his own most successful compositions, though mere trash, were of the class most admired and patronized; and therefore doubting the success of Weber's, which being diametrically opposite—scientific, highly melodious; in novelty and refinement, pre-eminent; in construction, graphically dramatic; and throughout this work, the airs forming a portion of the dialogue, which is the very essence of an Opera; might he not then, upon such grounds, conclude that his own music being admired and popular, Weber's could not be; or, that Weber's success as a writer, would be to the prejudice of his own? Upon this latter supposition, there might a little of *self mingle* with his *disinterested* opinion of the suitability of 'Der Freyschütz' for our English stage; whichever way it were, when the experiment was made, he certainly gave it his hearty support; and some said, assumed also the chief merit of producing it! The great Theatres, Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden, then servilely followed where they should have led: and now, after performing this splendid trophy of harmonious imagination most profitably two hundred nights each, Drury-Lane has degraded it, by mutilating and presenting it as an afterpiece, to the level of a farce! and Covent-Garden has followed the disgraceful example! If this be not ingratitude to the memory of him, who by it has done their petty states o much service, we know not what is. Well may our

drama be held in contempt, whilst such practices are tolerated.

Covent Garden, Monday, Feb. 11.

A young lady, whose name has been stated to be Percival, was this evening allowed the advantage of appearing on the boards of Covent Garden, in the character of *Belvidera*, but as none of the usual pains had been taken to usher her into notice, the public formed the very natural conclusion, that she was condemned in the opinion of managers and actors; and that the novelty was not worth witnessing. They, consequently, preferred seeking a sure amusement in the united efforts of Mathews and Liston at Drury Lane. We cannot blame the public, for we know, by experience, that mediocrity in an epic, in an historical painting, in a tragedy, or in a tragic actor, surpasses all the other miseries of human life put together. Prepared, therefore, to be tortured without measure or mercy, we were not a little pleased at being released, like *Jaffier* himself, without absolutely undergoing the rack. The début of Miss Percival, although not very brilliant, gave indication of qualities much wanted on the stage at present, and which, under judicious instruction, might enable her to fill with respectability the characters which her companions evidently think she has been a little too ambitious in aspiring to on her first appearance. In person, she is what is called a fine woman; her action was but indifferent; it requires much amendment, especially in the point of refinement; her recitation, although her voice is not particularly pleasing, was simple, true, and touching. She was favourably received by the audience, which was somewhat scanty; but no attempt was made to take a decided opinion on her merits by the announcement of a second performance.

Covent Garden, Wednesday.

Mr. Kean's performance of *Shylock* at this theatre, on the above mentioned evening, was one of the finest displays of the histrionic art we have lately witnessed. Conceiving the character in its nicest and most refined traits, he developed the author's idea by a succession of masterly efforts, till the Jew, in all the complication of his avarice and hate and national feeling, stood in a second reality before us. Were we to particularize the parts in which Mr. Kean employed his genius in all its most commanding energy, we should mention those which have already so often called forth applause. The speech in which *Shylock* tells *Jessica* not to look out on the public revelry, his manner of delivering this, is full of deep and natural passion; the same praise may be given to his delivery of that in which he listened to the tidings of his daughter's extravagance and the merchant's ruin; but it is not by the mention of any whole parts that we can convey an idea of his performance, its great merit consisting in those minute touches of feeling and passion, which were most powerful in their present effect, but are impossible to be described.

The other characters were well supported. Mr. C. Kemble's *Bassanio*, in that declamatory scene in which he gains *Portia's* acknowledgment of her love, was particularly good. Miss Jarman was better in the fictitious character of the Doctor of Laws, than that of *Portia* herself; and the part of *Launcelot* deserved considerable applause for the naked and grotesque simplicity of manner with which it was sustained.

New Tragic Actress.—A Correspondent, 'an admirer of merit,' dating from the Inner Temple, after expressing his entire approbation of the young lady who appeared at Covent-Garden, on Monday the 11th instant, attributes the non-announcement of her appearance to some caprice of the managers, or to green-room intrigue, and asks 'whether the public are to be deprived of the opportunity of judging for themselves, by the withdrawing an actress, whose talents promised so well to fill up the deficiency which has so long existed in legitimate tragedy.'

ENGRAVINGS.

Le Deshabilles. Engraved by T. Woolnath, from a Picture by De Braisfrenont, from the Collection of M. De Courti. Bulcock.

This picture, which represents a young lady undressing, is one of great difficulty to be kept within due limits, without offending the taste. Notwithstanding this difficulty, however, we think the artist has succeeded in presenting a very faithful delineation of an engaging figure thus occupied, without betraying any thing at which the most chaste could take offence. The countenance is full of innocence and sweetness, and the attitude natural and graceful. The furniture and orna-

ments of the room are also well drawn, and advantageously disposed; and the execution of the engraving is very skilfully done.

Gothic Furniture, consisting of twenty-seven Coloured Engravings, from Designs by A. PUGIN, with Descriptive Letter-press. 4to. Ackermann.

THE plates of this volume form its chief attraction, though the letter-press is not without its value. They represent models, or patterns, of almost all the articles of household furniture that can be named. Designed after the most approved fashion of the times, but adapted to the Gothic style or order, in a very ingenious and generally happy manner, the first Engraving represents the whole interior of a drawing-room, with every article of modern furniture and ornament brought out to view in its appropriate position. The design is full of taste, and the rich colouring reminds us of some portions of Mr. Beckford's splendid edifice at Fonthill Abbey. The remaining twenty-six Engravings contain each some one article of furniture, represented on a larger scale, and more in detail; sufficiently so, indeed, for any upholsterer to copy from with the greatest nicety. Among these are cabinets, book-cases, candelabras, flower-stands, beds, toilettes, chairs, tables, ball-furniture, musical instruments, sofas, bureaux, and a variety of other articles. The work is, indeed, so comprehensive, that whoever may desire to select furniture for a Gothic mansion complete, may find in it models of all he can desire.

LETTERS OF CRITO.—No. IV.

MR. LOCKHART'S 'ADAM BLAIR.'

To the Editor of the Athenæum.

SIR,—In one of Johnson's conversations with Boswell, I think Boswell supposed that Hill, who had made so many faults in translating, and adapting 'Zaire' to the English stage, could not possibly succeed in a tragedy of his own; to this Johnson replied, 'I don't know that, Sir; he may do better by himself than when encumbered by the genius of a greater man.' Many of Mr. Lockhart's school may, therefore, be glad to see him disencumbered of his 'Reviews,' and claiming the bays for his own compositions. It is certain that however you may have demonstrated the blunders which he made about the imaginative power, and poetry, so necessary in his opinion for didactic writers, who only pretend to describe human nature in the garb of these unpoetic terms, yet from so great a stickler for that power, who, as it is said, claims for himself and his father-in-law, to monopolize all the imagination in the world, my expectations were raised to an indescribable pitch, when I approached 'Valerius,' 'Adam Blair,' and 'Reginald Dalton.' Here, at any rate, I supposed we should find examples of the true epic; here fancy would revel, and the author would exhibit brilliant proofs of his plastic power, which was to fuse discordant materials into one glowing mass of eloquent harmony. Here we should find the most perfect illustration of the art of constructing a fable, and of preserving a great diversified whole in the best possible keeping. In short, here we were to find the best practical samples of that genius which alone could confer upon the Author, what, modest as it sounds, appears to be the summit of his ambition, a place in the 'Novelists' Library.* How far he has succeeded in this, we must ask the Librarian, who probably knows, and may be able to point out the precise shelf, where their works are to be found, a point of which we confess ourselves ignorant. At the same time, if the world be ignorant of it too, and if the very names of these books are, in England at least, scarcely known, it follows not, on that account, that they may not possess much intrinsic merit, and only required to be read in order to be properly appreciated. How long the 'Paradise Lost' languished in obscurity, till some high critics (and eminently Addison) took it in hand, is well known. These novels, therefore, may, like that great poem, for aught the world knows to the contrary, 'have wasted their sweetness on the desert air,' and only needed the aid of some helping hand to draw them from the gloom of unmerited oblivion. We own, however, that until Mr. Lockhart came from afar to direct our taste, and tell us what we ought, and ought not, to read, we knew not of these credentials for the high office which he has assumed, and it was only from their being credentials for such an office, that we were induced to examine them. The result is, in our opinion, not favourable to

Mr. Lockhart, and yet we are willing to confess, that there is pathos in Adam Blair, research in Valerius, and humour in Reginald Dalton. How, then, could he fail?—the answer is short. Though no longer encumbered with the genius of other writers, he is very much encumbered with his own. We will begin with Adam Blair.

This is a work, the fable of which is so little pleasing, and its real moral so decidedly repulsive, that we are astonished that any man of sense and imagination, but more particularly a man of virtue, should have adopted it for his subject. To Mr. Lockhart, no more than to yourself, need I point out, that, on the score of taste alone, this ought to have been avoided; for that taste can never be good, which can, by preference, busy itself in palliating actions that are bad. The effect of this work is to hold out a premium to vice; it is also the more dangerous because, dressed in the garb of refined feeling, which here pleases (if it do please) only to destroy. Its object, indeed, is not this; but, as we suppose, to show how repentance may restore a fallen mind—its effect to make people fall, probably, without repenting. The poison is certain, the antidote doubtful. It discloses, indeed, how a sickly sentiment, and seeming virtue, may commit acts of the most guilty profligacy, and yet attempt to preserve a hold upon the sympathy of the reader; at very best, it is to show, under the familiar form of a novel, how soon a wife, supposed to be embalmed in her husband's affections, may be forgotten; how a heart, almost withered by her loss, and visiting her tomb, may, within the precincts of that very tomb, (we speak it literally,) be consoled by smiles which lead on to adultery; lastly, how all this may happen to a clergyman, and pass under the name of sentiment, and be ultimately forgiven. This is of the very worst creation of that detestable German school, springing first from the wicked hypocrisy of Rousseau, perfected by Goethe, Schiller, and Kotzebue, and ending in the broader infamy of Foulbers.

This school, however, all men of true taste have long since despised, as all men of true morality have consigned it to execration. Thank God, the German Clelands of the mind, disguised though they may be, are yet treated, in our estimation, as Clelands. No English bosom loves or sympathises with Mrs. Haller; and even the wit and sentiment of our countryman, Sterne, cannot blind us to his hypocritical heart. We never thought, therefore, that a man nursed and employed every moment of his time in literature, and as we are most willing to believe an exemplary husband and father, could be guilty of the bad taste of imitating these masters, (masters though they be,) of a vicious and degraded school. We have no doubt that he never intended this; never thought he was doing wrong; nay, (for such is the allusion of the imaginative power when unsupported by common sense,) he, perhaps, thought he was doing right. This may save his heart, but it will not defend his understanding. However, if he was to imitate the taste of this vitiated school, we are, at least, glad that he has done it no better. Adam Blair is as sickly as its style, as its fable is faulty as to its moral. We do not mean to say that crime may not, and will not be pardoned, on true repentance. It is the sweetest as well as the most powerful consolation of our religion. But this is between our God and ourselves. The doctrine may, and ought, indeed, to prevail amongst men; but the example of it ought not, and cannot, be blazoned or rendered interesting in romance. Whoever can imbue himself with the spirit of Adam Blair, if a female with an ungentle husband, will think she has a right to be an adulteress; if a man, (though a clergyman,) may lend himself to the crime, yet hope still to be loved and esteemed as much as ever. The precept of 'Deceit exemplar, vitis imitabile,' has been too often disobeyed by men of greater powers than the author, but that does not excuse him. It is, fortunate, therefore, that though sometimes really affecting, the general style of his work is so artificial, the affectation so glaring, and the extravagance of the situations so out of all keeping, that when the book is closed, we never, as with Rousseau, or Goethe, wish to undergo the danger of opening it again. Take the following description of the husband of the adulteress.

'He was a thick-made, square-built, sturdy Highlander, with what are called heather legs (*anglicè* bandy.) His nose had blown up a good deal by snuff, or brandy, or both; his eyes were keen grey; his hair, eye-brows, and whiskers, bristly red; his bob-major dressed à *merveille*, and his Dutch uniform *fine* à *five-pence*. Now, the object of painting this husband in such disgusting colours, and of descending to such vulgarity, and even slang, in the description, is obviously, as far as it can, to palliate the crime of the wife; and to finish the account, this amiable person is a drunken,

brutal sensualist; makes his wife a drudge; starves her, and is jealous; yet even with such a man she is all sentiment, and would have submitted to all, 'had she been requited with affection; could she have been sure of one kind look, one tender kiss, when the night closed in upon her misery.' This is too ridiculous; but to complete the consistency, after the crime is committed, the wife dead, and her paramour scarcely saved from the grave, this revolting creature, this sensual brutal husband, behaves like a man of the kindest and most generous nature, and forgives Blair, in a manner to do honour to goodness, religion, and refinement itself.

I have no desire to press all this ungraciously on Mr. Lockhart; though his style, from its straining effort to produce effect, reaches any thing but its object; and its total want of simplicity, leaves us with little notion of a man whose business it is to direct the taste of others. Of this, among others, take the following example: in a hot summer day, nature is made to *pant* (not with heat, but) *under the sense of her own excessive beauty*. This is an extravagance; puerility which we did not expect in a man of Mr. Lockhart's cultivation. Conceive this, Sir, as said of a handsome woman at mid-summer. We might, I think, doubt, (much as a lady may think of her beauty,) whether she would affirm that it was her keen sense of it, that made her pant, whatever might be its effect on the gentleman.

Again, a brook is made to retire from the shallows, into 'a deep green pool,' which is the image of water covered with duck-weed. The said brook, though thus likened to a duck-weed pond, is said to be slumbering, 'clear as some translucent gem.' In another place, Mrs. Campbell, though not a mother, is fond of children. This, Mr. Lockhart (unphilosophically, I think,) attributes to an instinctive love of their offspring, when they have any, implanted by nature in women; and this he calls a 'deep well, placed in every womanly breast,' so deeply that it can never be exhausted. *The sweet waters of motherly affection, therefore, rise freely whenever called for.* This is sad affectation, as to language, and still worse as to sentiment; for who does not see that a love of children, as children, depends upon other principles than motherly instinct, else, why does it exist often in quite as much strength in men?

In another passage, there is a still greater instance, of that unphilosophic mind, which, whether as critic, or author, often attends the lucubrations of this gentleman. Mrs. Campbell, in early youth, had sometimes witnessed the effects of the simple family worship which once prevailed in Scotland. On her return to Blair's house, she naturally feels her former impressions revive, just in the moment of the evening exercise. This, simply and unaffectedly told, would be pleasing. But the author is determined to make an effort. He remembers that in the old Spanish romances, fiends, demons, or sorcerers, are scared in the very instant of temptation or torture, by some sudden gleam of the moon, beaming on the symbolic cross blit of a warrior's sword. To this, he compares the revived feelings of Mrs. Campbell upon the sudden sight of this family worship; as if the moral revival of a pious feeling were the same as the mechanical repression of a devilish one.

There is, however, a well-made opportunity, which to be sure is seized, to indulge in the amplification of this sad medley of conceits; (for it is nothing else;) and accordingly, there is here a talk of the sorceries of unhallowed pleasure; the fiends of passion, and the demons of crime. We will not spoil this by asking how Mrs. Campbell was a fiend or a demon scared in the moment of tempting or torturing a victim, because she had come back to an early friend, after having been herself tempted and tortured in the world? All this, with submission, shows any thing but clearness of ideas, and only tends to confine our altered opinion of Mr. Lockhart's correctness of perception.

The obscurity, however, of the Editor of 'The Quarterly' arises from his determination to be metaphysical, and to show how well he can generalize upon the commonest subjects. Thus, there being a trifling difference in manners between Blair and Mrs. Campbell, it is called *those adverse influences, in themselves rather of negative than positive quality*. Therefore, because some men have been led to form friendships with others of a different disposition, or rather of an inferior caste of character, to their own, he chooses to attribute it to a principle in human nature, and observes, that the attachment 'may be ultimately referred, not to original identity, but original diversity of opinion.' To prove this, he gives the instance of Achilles and Patroclus; Luther and Melancthon; Socrates, who liked Alcibiades better than Plato; and Johnson, who liked Boswell better than Burke. In these, and other examples, I own, Sir, I cannot compliment the author on his know-

ledge of human nature. The friendships he has mentioned were evidently owing, not to diversity of opinions, but to the acknowledged inferiority, and, therefore, subservency of one party to the other. The greatest minds stand in need of relaxation. They cannot always be in a state of competition, which they would be if their constant and intimate companions were always like themselves. Hence, though they may feel excited by equals, or rivals, whom they may admire, their repose is in quiet affection, and among characters with whom they can unbend at pleasure. Hence, Prior is said to have retired from the highest company to that of a private soldier, and the real favourite companion of Somers was generally a dependent chaplain. This is the true account; nor can all the pomp of generalization, in which this author abounds, so much to the sacrifice of perspicuity, alter it a hair.

I fear, Sir, to fatigue you, but I cannot help giving one or two more examples of the same tension of style which distinguishes, (and does so for the worse,) inflated from simple pathos. The heroine is relating the follies of her conduct, and the disappointment of her mind. A natural writer, such as Goldsmith or Fielding, would have here allowed nature to speak for herself; but this is beneath the editor of such a Review as the Quarterly, and accordingly we have 'the green enthusiasm which had buoyed her up while she was floating, with her eyes open, to abandonment and scorn; the glowing heart of hearts, which she had laid bare to the breath of insult; the confidence which had grown like a gourd, only that, like a gourd, the next day's sun might see it withered to the inmost fibre, and every broad green leaf already mouldering into the dust of derision.'

Here, to say nothing of the extraordinary image of a lady floating with her eyes open, and, of course, with her back upon the water, we find confidence compared to a pumpkin.

I think, Sir, your good taste will wonder at this in a man who prides himself so much on the knowledge of Belles Lettres. Such a man, a critic by profession, is not to be reminded, that in metaphor, and even in regular simile, nothing is so dangerous, and therefore so reprehended by all good critics, as to push the comparison to too great minuteness. To compare confidence to a plant, whether of quick or slow growth, would have been elegant. Thus Lord Chatham said it was a plant of slow growth, and the man of taste, as well as the politician, admired. But had he particularized the plant, called it a gourd or a pumpkin, with broad green leaves, and shown it *baking* in the sun till its inside was burnt out, and its leaves were mouldering into dust; and that dust, again, (by another metaphor, before the first was done with,) not real dust, but the dust of derision,—we question if the beautiful comparison of Lord Chatham would have had the same effect upon his hearers, or be quoted as it is by posterity. From the moment I read this turgid piece of confusion, I own I took my leave of Mr. Lockhart, as a man whose good or bad opinion was of the smallest consequence in criticism. Similar, but inferior to this, is the image of 'the bosom on which anguish, remorse, despair, sat like midnight demons, flapping in unison their cold and mighty wings.'

Anguish, remorse, and despair may be justly called midnight demons, and may even sit upon a devoted bosom; but when we see them all three at once, flapping cold and mighty wings in unison together, our terror gives way to something very near to the ludicrous.

In Valerius there is a passage not very unlike this, wherein a contented slave is likened to a bird, whose wings are ever strong, and their flight ever easy. Had the author contented himself with this, we should be glad to compliment him; but he goes on, and because the feathers of a bird's wing keep his body safe from wet, a 'rain of affliction' is sent on purpose 'to glide off' from the slave's metaphorical wing 'as fast as it could from the real one of a bird.' A protecting wing is an apposite phrase, but we doubt whether wings upon our bodies have ever been metaphorically used for keeping us warm and dry: a very little more, and we might almost have expected allusions to the oily nature of the quills and feathers.

Under all these attempts at fine writing, which, like most laboured attempts, banish, rather than create, sympathy, there are some awkwardnesses, and some vulgarisms, which, I think, Sir, you, no more than myself, would have expected, from a person in Mr. Lockhart's situation—when we come to Valerius, we shall find downright and glaring bad English. Meantime, in Adam Blair, one wishes to know how a voice can be *retuned*, or what is the meaning of *toning a voice* at

all.* We also feel astonished at such expressions as these: 'She plucked up her courage;' she gave it the go-by rather sharply; 'Mr. Semple politely gave the go-by to the subject.'† If she did this politely, it is more, surely, than the author has done in describing it. But for heaven's sake, what can a writer like Mr. Lockhart mean by such low and vulgar phrases?—Not, be it observed, used ludicrously upon low subjects, but in passages as sober, and in one of them as solemn, as any in the book? As an author, we might be inclined to say, he had forgotten himself, and spare him;—as a critic, claiming from his present situation to be of the very first rank, and holding all others cheap, whether as critics, or authors, I think these vulgarisms, to say the best of them, are singularly unfortunate.

CRITO.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

A second series of *Chronicles of the Canonage* is on the eve of appearing. Sir Walter Scott is also preparing a volume of *Essays on Gardening and Planting*.

Miss Edgeworth is writing a novel, entitled, 'Taking for Granted,' which is likely to prove as interesting as her former productions.

A Life of Byron, by Mr. Moore, will, we understand, appear shortly, and as Mr. Murray and the author have agreed to forget all previous disputes on the subject, and unite their materials, the work will, in all probability, be complete in its information.

Mrs. Regina M. Roche is about to publish, by subscription, a novel, in three volumes, called 'Contrast.' As this lady, whose character and talents are highly deserving of respect, has lately been suffering under great domestic calamity, the relief of which depends on the success of her work, we trust it will obtain a large share of public attention.

M. Fredericq Degeorge, we have read in a French Journal, is about to publish in Paris, a work, under the title, 'Du Journalisme en Angleterre,' with this motto:

'Nourri dans le serail, j'en connais les détours.'

It is added, that this work, which will form an svo. volume, will contain a complete statistical account of all the political and literary Journals published in London; and, what we think will prove a most interesting feature in the publication, portraits of the most illustrious of the editors and contributors.

A Treatise on the proceedings to be adopted by Members in conducting Private Bills through the House of Commons, with observations upon their powers and duties in relation to such Bills. By T. M. Sherwood, Parliamentary Agent.

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A Letter to the Right Honourable Robert Peel, his Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the Impediments and Abuses existing in the present system of Medical Education, with suggestions for its improvement. By Henry William Dewhurst, Esq., F.R.S., &c., Professor of Anatomy and Surgery.

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A new edition of the 'Adventures of Naufregus' is in the press, and will be ready in a few weeks.

Early in March will be published, 'Plain Advice to Landlords and Tenants, Lodging-house-keepers and Lodgers; with a Summary of the Law of Distress, and the Duties of Brokers,' &c. &c. By the author of 'Short Instructions to Administrators, Executors,' &c.

In the course of May will be published, 'Horne Tooke's Diversions of Purley.' The new edition from the last corrections and improvements of the author, consisting nearly of one-sixth of new matter. The forthcoming edition is edited by Mr. Richard Taylor, and will make two volumes in octavo.

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† Adam Blair, pp. 90, 103, 108.

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UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.

Cambridge, Feb. 15.—William A. Collins, Esq., M.A., of Christ College, was on Saturday last elected a Fellow on the Finch and Baines' Foundation.

Oxford, Feb. 15.—At a Convocation on Thursday last, the thanks of the University were voted to the Right Hon. C.W.W. Wynne for his liberal attention in offering a writership, belonging to his patronage, in the East India Company's service, as a prize for competition among the junior members of the University. His liberal offer was accepted.

The following degrees were conferred the same day:—M.A. Rev. F. A. Sterkey, Christ Church.—B.A. W. Reade, Queen's Coll., Grand Compounder.—H. D. Serrell and P. Poore, Queen's Coll.—J. Ross, Lincoln Coll.—W. M. Levi, Wadham Coll.—J. Whalley, Brasenose Coll.—H. D. Wickham, Exeter Coll.—Lord Viscount Stuart, eldest son of Earl Castle Stuart, has been admitted a Nobleman of New College.

WEEKLY METEOROLOGICAL JOURNAL.

Hours of observation of A.M. and P.M.	Feb.	Therm. A.M. P.M.	Winds.	Weather.	Cloud.
	Mon. 11	33° 31° 6	N.E.	Snow.	The wind clouded up the morning, and throughout the week, Friday, cloudless, but no rain on Thursday and Sunday.
Tues. 12	31° 30° 4	N.E.	Snow.		
Wed. 13	31° 33°	N.E.	Foggy.		
Thur. 14	34° 33°	S.W.	Snow.		
Frid. 15	37° 35° 2	S.W to W	Serene.		
Sat. 16	37° 37°	Variable	Foggy.		
Sun. 17	40° 35° 2	S.E.	Clear.		

Serene on Saturday morning; overcast with a fog during the rest of the day; a strong wind from the N. in the higher atmosphere; in the lower, calm or variable. Evenings lazy, except on Thursday, Friday, and Sunday.

Astronomical Observations.

The Moon nearest to the earth on Wednesday, in conjunction with Mercury on Sat. 4 h. 39' A.M. in conjunction with Venus on Sun. 6 h. 30' P.M. Sun's place on the 17th, 27° 52' 25" in Aquarius.

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PORTRAIT of Mr. BULMER.—It having been suggested by many of the Subscribers to the highly distinguished Typographical Works which have been produced at the SHAKESPEARE PRESS, that a PORTRAIT of the Gentleman who so successfully conducted that Establishment would, to the admirers of Fine Printing, be a desideratum, Mr. BASHAW begs to inform the Public, that he has executed a FRUIT from a Portrait he lately painted of Mr. BULMER. It is of a size adapted to bind up with the editions of Boydell and Nicol's Shakspeare, Milton's Poetical Works, the Rev. Dr. Dibdin's splendid publications, &c. &c., and may be had of Mr. Ramsay, No. 30, Charles-street, Middlesex Hospital, and of every respectable Printseller of the Metropolis.

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